

Thisaphak, Phithaksak (2015) Thai internet forum : user practices in news participation and the impacts on mainstream journalism. PhD Thesis. SOAS, University of London.

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THAI INTERNET FORUM:

**User Practices in News Participation and
the Impacts on Mainstream Journalism**

Phithaksak Thisaphak

Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

2015

Centre for Media Studies
SOAS, University of London

DECLARATION FOR PHD THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Within the contemporary political context of ‘Thai power’, this dissertation explores how an Internet forum can be used as a tool for civic empowerment and democratisation, because such digital platforms, where users can connect and share news, appear to be rather neglected in academic research literature. Thailand’s Pantip.com is the case study in the project. The three dimensions of investigation include the content in conversation threads, the content creators, and the impacts of content on Thai news media. The methodologies used are: discourse analysis, focus groups, and interviews.

The main findings indicate that Pantip.com is a virtual place that is exceptional in Thai society. Indeed, it could be called the Thai agonistic public space for the expression of different views and voices, with active intellectual work that supports a social movement and alternative media content. In regard to news production, the dynamic relation between Pantip.com users and Thai professional journalists initiates a vigorous news ecology.

Hence, this study makes several noteworthy contributions to a better understanding of Thai online participation. First, Pantip.com is used as a tool for the democratic reform of the Thai media themselves. Second, the intense regulation of participation in the fora is beneficial, since it enhances the content quality and the standard of discussion in the threads. Third, Pantip.com and the Thai news media create a virtuous circle of influence while, at the same time, providing a counterbalancing action for one another.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My doctoral journey and the completion of this PhD dissertation would not have been possible without the generous and tremendous support from all of the following organisations and people, to whom I would like to express my gratitude:

- Dhurakij Pundit University, Thailand, for the Staff Development Scholarship, and Associate Professor Dr. Varakorn Samakoses, the President, for his encouragement;
- Professor Annabelle Sreberny, my supervisor, for her guidance and insight into the research, and for her help, which went beyond the call of duty. She is not only an inspiring teacher, but also the role model for my academic pathway;
- Dr. Rachel Harrison and Dr. Dina Matar, my supervisory committee, for their comments and suggestions at the initial stage of the research project;
- Research samples: the 18 Pantip.com users, who gave their consent to my collection and analysis of their personal data, and who agreed to participate in the focus group discussions; and also the 24 Thai journalists, in both print and broadcast news media, who gave their time for the in-depth interviews;
- Ms Phimonrat Thisaphak, my sister, for all of her help during fieldwork and while I was far away from home;
- SOAS's Doctoral School Building, for a peaceful working environment and its superlative facilities that have truly served my passion and commitment during the writing-up;
- English, American, Dutch, Finnish, Chinese, Korean, Egyptian, Pakistani, and Thai research-degree fellows, who are my floormates in the basement of the Doctoral School Building, for their friendship and respect, as well as for their nice chat to refresh my isolated state of mind.

Thank you very much.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 RESEARCH FOCUS AND RATIONALE



*The screenshot of the frontend of Pantip.com
(Accessed: 7th October 2014, its eighteenth birthday anniversary)*

In cyberspace during this week, the very hot issue, which has resulted in Bangkok's Governor in defending his public office, is that of the criticism about him in Pantip.com. The participants in the *Ratchada Room* forum have acted as online detectives to investigate Bangkok's 10,000 CCTV installation project. Their reports, with photos, have revealed a serious problem with this project. The surveillance cameras in several areas appear to be without video recorders and the cable lines to transmit a signal. (Khaosod, 2011).

The scandals of Ponpatcha, who claims she is the first Thai student to be awarded the Best Student Film at the Cannes International Film Festival 2009, and Nathan, who claims to be one of the actors in a Hollywood film, are only the small examples of how rationality is in Pantip's sphere. The passion of some users who participate in the forum to check facts, particularly on entertainment issues in the *Chaloemthai Room*, goes beyond that of journalists in the mainstream media. A lot of information has been cited in reportage, or has been referred to as a source of news. (ASTVManageronline, 2009).

Although it is in the online community in which there seems to be no rules and governance, Pantip.com creates a world of truth by fact-checking and the investigation duty of its users. On many occasions, we have seen the national media refer to the information on this website. Sometimes professional journalists are utterly embarrassed due to the deficiencies in their fact-checking. However, Pantip's users delve into the story in more depth. (Phitsanurak, 2009, Bangkokbiznews).

The three citations from Thailand's mainstream news media, *Khaosod*, *ASTVManager*, and *Bangkokbiznews*, above, are some of the evidence that shows the power and competency of the Thai Internet forum, Pantip.com. Widely known among users as a "web board", Pantip is also an online meeting place for conversing, raising questions, finding answers, sharing experiences, expressing views, and criticizing current affairs in their diverse aspects, including the news presented by mainstream media. Topics discussed range from trivia about livelihood, sport, and fashion to serious issues relating to legislation, science, and politics. Natee Vichisorasatra (see Pitch, 2002), a columnist from the English-language newspaper in Thailand, *The Nation*, comments that the political discussion in Pantip reveals intelligent ideas and constructive criticism. Moreover, the non-hierarchical and inclusive nature of dialogue, as well as the tracking and filtering practices of the participants, lead to his admiration for this Internet forum.

As an open environment attracting approximately 200,000 visitors per day (Suttikhun, 2009), Pantip is one of the most-visited websites in Thailand¹. Public opinion and current events in the conversation threads are often cited in Thai mainstream news media to gauge the public's mood about various issues (Suthana, 2007, p. 5). Numerous examples of evidence, some of which have already been presented at the beginning of this chapter, have proved that the discussion in Pantip can either influence the news agenda by finding and reiterating ideas and events until the traditional media cover them in more depth, or sometimes illustrates the weak performance of the watchdog and gatekeeper functions of Thai professional journalists. However, the questions associated with this phenomenon are: Why do Thai citizens use Pantip and discuss news in this Internet forum? Why do Thai journalists pay attention to that discussion? Furthermore, beyond these points, what is the relationship between this online medium and the mainstream news media in Thailand? These broad questions act as the focus of this research and the driver for the investigation, which involves the concepts of the Internet forum as a public space, participatory journalism, and the way in which these two issues relate to the process of democratisation under the auspices of Thai power (authoritarianism).

¹ On 10th April 2009, Pantip was awarded 'Truehits.net Web Award 2008' by the National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA) and the Ministry of Science and Technology as being the most visited computer site in Thailand.

1.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT PANTIP.COM

Founder: Mr. Wanchat Padungrat
Company: Internet Marketing Company Limited
Address: 63/4 Soi Inthamara 1, Sutthisan Winitchai Road
Samsennai, Phayathai, Bangkok 10400 Thailand
Telephone: +66 (0) 2 357 1934
Web address: www.pantip.com

The objective of its establishment

Pantip² was registered as a domain name in 1996, and it was first introduced to Thai citizens on 7th October in that year. The primary objective of the service is to create a website that offers a digital magazine in the Thai language. The content relates to computer and ICT-related issues for online readers. However, Internet users did not express a strong interest in the service. Public relations activities for the website were therefore initiated. Mr. Wanchat had an electronic mail response from a Thai doctor who provided advice about how to promote attractiveness in website development. The suggestions of this doctor were beneficial, thus inspiring Mr. Wanchat to share his ideas publicly. This encouraged him to adapt Pantip, so that it became a channel for knowledge sharing and opinion exchange among internet users during the next year (Pakaphan, 2006, p. 103).

A Bulletin Board System began to be employed in 1997. Initially, behavior relating to the posting of messages was mainly correlated to computer and communication technology. Discussion topics were more likely to be varied as

² It was named after Pantip Plaza, which is the largest computer retail complex and software market in Bangkok. However, it is now widely known as ‘thousand tips’ due to the homonym in the Thai language.

the Pantip website gained a higher profile and more users. *Thairath* (2000), “Cyber Society” column, reported that about two hundred thousand people visit Pantip daily. Noppadol (2005, p.160) identified that there were about four hundred people applying for membership of this website each week. Today, it is very well-known as the Internet forum among Thai Internet users. Table 1.1 shows the list of the most popular websites in Thailand. Ranking is conducted by two information technology companies, *Alexa Internet Inc.* and *SimilarWeb Ltd.*, the US- and the UK-based leading providers of web traffic data and analytics. The global rank of Pantip and its other relevant information in relation to the site visiting are also presented.

Table 1.1 Pantip’s ranking and the site access

Ranking provided by

Alexa Internet Inc.³

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Website</i>
1	Google.co.th
2	Facebook.com
3	Youtube.com
4	Google.com
5	Pantip.com Global rank: 770 Daily page views per visitor: 5.5 Daily time on site: 7.35 Minutes
6	Ebay.com
7	Live.com
8	Yahoo.com
9	Msn.com
10	Amazon.com

Ranking provided by

SimilarWeb Ltd.⁴

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Website</i>
1	Facebook.com
2	Google.co.th
3	Youtube.com
4	Google.com
5	Pantip.com Global rank: 520 Daily page views per visitor: 2.82 Daily time on site: 5.45 Minutes Total visit (Aug. 2015): 161.70 Millions
6	Live.com
7	Instragram.com
8	Sanook.com
9	Yahoo.com
10	Twitter.com

³ Source: <http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/TH> (Accessed: 15 September 2015)

⁴ Source: <http://www.similarweb.com/country/thailand> (Accessed: 15 September 2015)

The content in Pantip is divided into “*Rooms*” based on the topics of discussion that are clearly shown on the main web page. Non-members are allowed to visit any “*Room*” that they prefer. However, visitors who would like to post messages or share comments need to register and to apply for membership. Each “*Room*” also categorises threads into six groups, and these include; Question, Discussion, Poll, Review, Selling, and News Talks. The table below illustrates the numbers of all of the “*Rooms*” that are currently available (31st March 2015) on Pantip and the topic of the discussions in each “*Room*”.

Table 1.2 Pantip’s “Rooms” and their topics of discussion

<i>Number</i>	<i>Room</i>	<i>Topics of discussion</i>
1	<i>Bangkunprom</i>	Drama, series, celebrity, and television programmes
2	<i>Blue Planet</i>	Travel, outdoor activities, hotel booking, and airlines
3	<i>Cartoon</i>	Cartoon and animation
4	<i>Chaika</i>	Home, appliance, accessories, and decoration
5	<i>Chaloemkrung</i>	Singers, musicians, songs, concerts, and musical instruments
6	<i>Chaloemthai</i>	Films, short-films, film festivals, film studios, and movie stars
7	<i>Chanruen</i>	Family, pregnancy, and child care
8	<i>Gallery</i>	Portrait, and scenery images
9	<i>Green Zone</i>	Environment, sustainable energy, and organic farming
10	<i>Hongsamud</i>	Literature, language, history, and philosophy
11	<i>Horsilp</i>	Art, design, drawing, graphics, and multimedia
12	<i>Jatujak</i>	Pets, plants, craftwork, collectable items, and gardening
13	<i>Klaiban</i>	Study, work, and living abroad
14	<i>Klong</i>	Cameras, and photography techniques
15	<i>Konkruao</i>	Food, restaurant, cookery, and recipes
16	<i>Mabunkrong</i>	Communication technology and equipment
17	<i>Pantip</i>	Comment, feedback, and suggestions to the Pantip team
18	<i>Pumipak</i>	Events and current affairs in Thailand’s regional areas
19	<i>Raisangkad</i>	<i>Topics that do not fit with any other ‘Room’ can be posted here.</i>
20	<i>Ratchada</i>	Motorbikes, automobiles, car care, and accessories
21	<i>Ratchadamnoen</i>	Politics, political parties, and government

Table 1.2 Pantip's "Rooms" and their topics of discussion (continued)

Number	Room	Topics of discussion
22	<i>Ruammit</i>	<i>All of the discussion topics from all of the 'Rooms' are unified here.</i>
23	<i>Siam Square</i>	Teenagers' lives; including study, love, and friends
24	<i>Salaprachakom</i>	Law, economy, social problem, and consumerism
25	<i>Sassana</i>	Religion, benefaction, and philanthropy
26	<i>Silicon Valley</i>	Computers, software, hardware, programming, games
27	<i>Silom</i>	Marketing, management, human resources, and small and medium-sized enterprises
28	<i>Sinthorn</i>	Stocks, investment, money, and finance
29	<i>Suanlumpini</i>	Health, diet, mental and physical illness
30	<i>Suppacharasai</i>	Sport and athletes
31	<i>Thanon Nakkian</i>	Novels, fictions, short-stories, poems, and folktales
32	<i>Tohkruangpang</i>	Fashion, cosmetics, jewelry, accessories, and beautification
33	<i>Wahkor</i>	Science, engineering, physics, and astronomy

As far as the financial resource is concerned, Pantip is a commercial website that is sustained its business by advertising. However, the sales and marketing unit belong to *Nation Multimedia Group*, one of the biggest media conglomerates in Thailand, who manages advertising, sales promotion, publicity, and public relations for Pantip. Mr. Wanchat (2013), Pantip founder, reveals that *Nation Multimedia Group* is the alliance of his company. The benefit from this is that it allows him to have a single concentration on the management of the content of website. Thai weekly business newspaper, Prachachart Turakij (2012 and 2015), reports that Web banners are Pantip's main source of revenue. The cost of banner advertisement on the main webpage starts from 35,000 baht (equal to 700 Pounds Sterling) per month, depending on the number of Pantip users who click and access that advertisement. In 2014, Pantip earned over 50 million baht (a million Pounds Sterling) from over 100 advertisers. 60 percent of

this earning was from the banner ads in all “Rooms” and 40 percent was from the data storage renting out and electronic commerce in Pantipmarket.com, Pantown.com, and Bloggang.com which are also the web community run by Mr. Wanchat for specific purpose, as its name suggests. In addition, he stated to Prachachart Turakij (2009) that the privacy of Pantip member is taken very seriously. So, the banner ads only appear at the top of each webpage. Direct marketing via telephone or e-mail and the distraction from the banner ads, such as flashing and moving items, are renounced. Remarkably, Pantip positions itself as the website for Thais by Thais. Foreign investors are rejected and selling the site to the stock market is not in business plan (Daily News, 2013).

Membership registration

Based on an interview with Pantip’s Members Relations Officer (Naparath, 2013), any membership application is categorised into one of three types. The first type requires the number of the users’ Thai identification card. Applicants must provide their personal data, attach a photo, or scan the image of their ID card in during the process of application. The Pantip team will verify the identity of the applicant prior to granting approval. This type of member also has a Smiley emoticon with their pseudonym and they can post messages, share opinions, delete inappropriate content, rate constructive comments, and complain about products and services. The second type is made up of a group of members who apply by providing only their mobile phone number. Members will have a telephone symbol with their pseudonym and the messages that they are able to post on the forum are partially limited, for example, posting an original message for making complaints

about products and services is not allowed. Their membership is also valid for only one month. The last group, which is called the “passport system”, is made up of those who apply by simply providing an e-mail address. These members have to activate their e-mail address and then a unique member ID will be given to them. They are shown as a user name instead of a pseudonym. They can merely post an original message to ask a question and the number of times they can post a comment in a thread is restricted. Moreover, the Internet Protocol address will appear with their message.

Rules and regulations for posting messages

Despite the fact that Pantip users can freely express their opinions, there are rules for posting messages that have been set, and these are presented in the “Rules and Regulations” section of the website. Pantip explains that the objective of these rules is to “maintain a pleasant atmosphere for discussion.” The membership of any user who fails to comply with the rules will be terminated. To join a communication thread, forum participants should strictly follow these rules:

1. Do not post messages or content that criticizes or incriminates the King and the Royal Family;
2. Do not post rude and aggressive messages, or content that violates acceptable social norms;
3. Do not post indecent, destructive, or pornographic messages or content;

4. Do not post messages, or content that accuses or insults others without valid reference sources;
5. Do not post messages that challenge, or provoke others with the intention of causing a quarrel or turbulence when the ground of such an argument is not the appropriate expression of the views of the common people;
6. Do not post messages that offend or destructively criticize religions, or the lessons of all religions;
7. Do not use a pseudonym that is the real name of another with intent to deceive the public community and to destroy the reputation of the name's owner;
8. Do not post messages that provoke conflict between schools or societies;
9. Do not share personal information relating to other people, such as e-mails, telephone numbers, with the intent of annoying them or causing trouble;
10. Do not post messages, or content that is illegal or against the ethical conduct of society.

Some laws that are based on Thailand's criminal and civil laws are also announced on the "Rules and Regulations" section of the website in order to educate users. Pantip's Members Relations Officer (Napararat, 2013) explained that these ten rules form the guidelines with which the team complies in regulating communications in the threads. Ten staffs members are empowered to inspect the online fora, based on their working schedules and the types of discussion topics. As a public space for idea sharing, it is impossible for Pantip to review a large number of daily posts prior to their dissemination on the website. The team, therefore, applies a "publish-then-filter" policy that allows messages to be seen in the online threads instantly. Forum participants play

an important role as moderators, observing and reporting messages that violate the rules. Participants can notify Pantip's staff by clicking the "Bin" symbol at the right-hand corner of message box. The relevant officers will be able to detect any unusual features of such messages, examine the reasons for the request to delete, and then delete unsuitable messages from the thread.

An unsuitable message will be replaced by a new one, stating the reason for the deletion for the forum's participants, and also there is a poster to enable users to understand why it has to be removed from the thread. Here is an example of reasons given for deleting messages:

- *This comment is deleted due to unsuitable content that may cause conflicts on the web board. The objective of this deletion is not to judge comment, but to maintain a pleasant atmosphere of opinion sharing among the members of the web board.*
- *This comment was deleted due to illegal or unethical content.*
- *This comment was automatically deleted to maintain a pleasant atmosphere of opinion sharing among members.*
- *This comment was deleted at the request of its writer.*

Research by Chanakarn (2010, p.101) highlights that this strict inspection process promotes Pantip users' responsibility in posting messages. Noppadol (2005, p.170) observes that forum participants, who apply for a membership by presenting their Thai national identification number, are liable to make careful contributions when

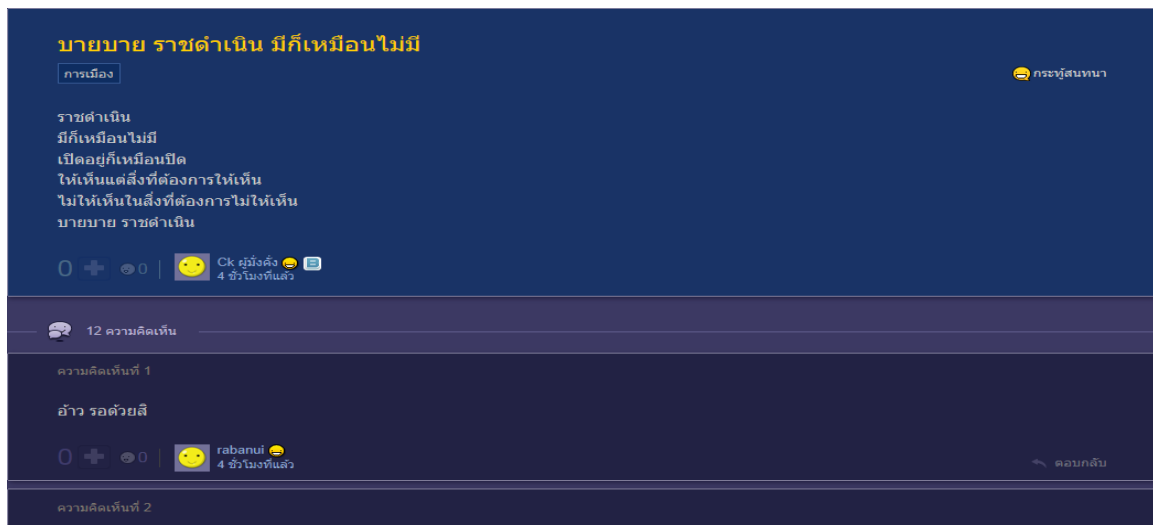
sharing views. Furthermore, some Pantip users believe that messages posted by this group of senders are reliable, because their sources can be traced. Ronnapol (2008) has stated that although Pantip earns revenue from advertising, such ads and banners are properly located so as not to distract users while they are scrolling down to read content. As a consequence, the public image of Pantip is most likely to be as a knowledge-sharing space for website users, rather than as a commercial space for website sponsors (p.248). Above all, forum participants also play a vital role in encouraging senders who post quality messages. A satisfied emoticon will be given to some messages in a thread. Moreover, one of the most interesting means, in terms of online participation, is in the way that users share consensus by granting a popular vote to some original message in the thread in order to recommend it as “suggested reading.” From the researcher’s point of view, Pantip users not only have relatively high freedom of expression, but also have the authority to organize their online community.

External effects toward Pantip

Wanchat (2013), the founder of Pantip, said that his website is a space for sharing opinion. It is therefore inevitable that some people or organizations may well be dissatisfied because they are criticised by the public in this online forum. As a result, it is impossible for Pantip to be free from threat or external interruption and intimidation. The Pantip team has received a huge number of complaints from the private sector, while those from government agencies are very rare. Wanchat reveals that over ten years of the service, only twice has a local political faction intervened in Pantip.

The first time was immediately after the coup d'état on 19th September 2006, when the Royal Thai Army was controlling the exposure of public content in the media, including Pantip. The second time was during political disorder in 2009. Wanchat decided to suspend the *Ratchadamnoen Room* (the forum for political discussion) for personal reasons, as there were several posts in the threads that were intentionally created to deceive website users and to harshly stimulate political conflict.

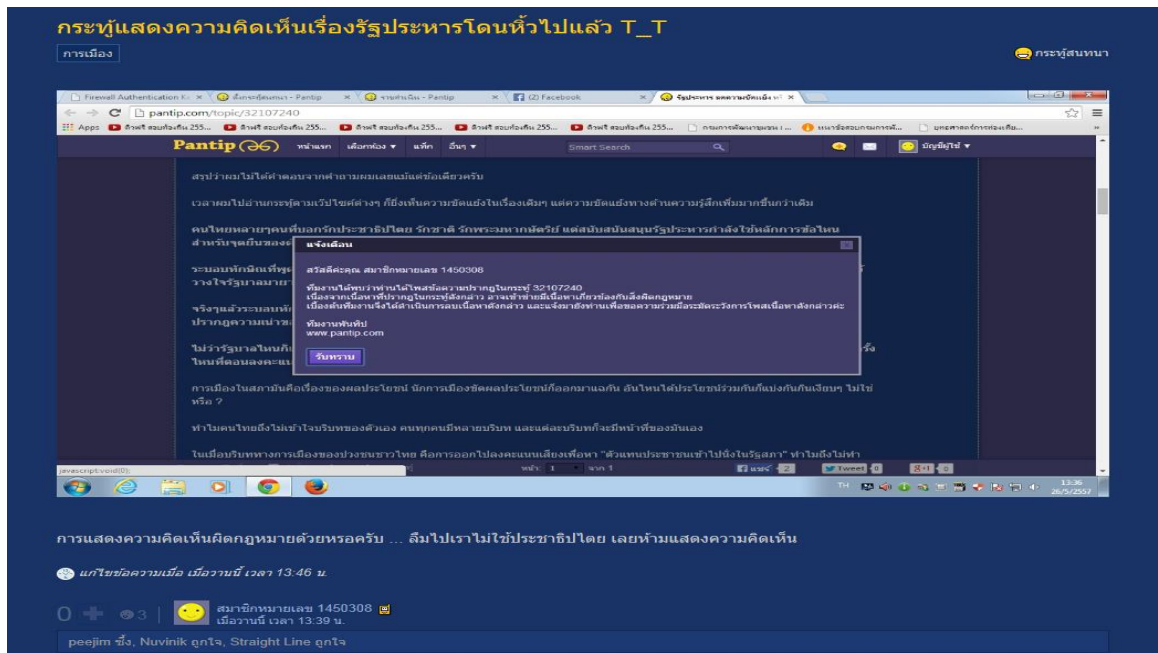
The interview with Pantip's founder was conducted before the recent coup d'état on 22nd May 2014. Despite the effect of this coup on Pantip not having been examined with Wanchat, it was discovered through the researcher's personal observation that Pantip had deleted messages that criticised the coup, as well as the Royal Thai Army. The following statements are the headlines of some of the thread starters or original messages that were posted in the *Ratchadamnoen Room* during the week after the coup d'état:



The headline of the message that was posted on 27th May 2014, reads:

Bye Bye Ratchadamnoen, your presence is actually absent.

Source: <http://pantip.com/topic/32111897>



The headline of the message that was posted on 26th May 2014, reads:

Views on coup d'état were pinched. T_T

Source: <http://pantip.com/topic/32107395>

However, from the personal observation of the researcher, it was evident that some of Pantip's users agreed with message deletion and they encouraged other forum participants to share comments with caution in order to prevent the service's suspension by the Army. Below are the original messages posted by a user with the pseudonym *ถ่ายรูปกันนะ* (*Let's take a photo*) on 23rd May 2014.

ช่วยกันปกป้องเว็บพันทิปด้วยครับ

การเมือง กระตุกสนทนา

ตอนนี้กระตุกต่อต้านทหารเริ่มมีมากขึ้น
ผมเกรงว่าพันทิปอาจโดนผลกระทบจากกระตุกของพวกที่ไม่รู้จักหน้าที่ ซึ่งที่ผ่านมาพันทิป ห้องราชดำเนิน เป็นพื้นที่ให้เราแลกเปลี่ยนความคิดเห็นทางการเมือง ได้อย่างอิสระภายใต้กฎหมาย เราจึงต้องช่วยกันรักษาบรรยากาศของห้องไว้

แต่กลับมีคนบางกลุ่มพยายามตั้งกระตุกต่อต้านทหาร ซึ่งเห็นได้ว่า เวปมาสเตอร์ต้องทำงานอย่างหนักในการ ลบกระตุกดังกล่าว จึงอยากขอความร่วมมือทุกคนในการ แจ้งกระตุกที่มีเนื้อหา ต่อต้านทหาร ขัดต่อประกาศของทหาร หรือยุยง ส่งเสริมให้คนคิดต่าง แยกแยก ออกไป โดยยกดูรายงานกระตุกแจ้งลบ ไปยังเวปมาสเตอร์ อย่างเร่งด่วน เพื่อให้มีการเซฟรูป หรือ copy ข้อมูลในกระตุกดังกล่าวไปเผยแพร่ อันจะนำมาซึ่งความวุ่นวายต่อชาติบ้านเมือง

จึงเขียนมาเพื่อโปรดพิจารณาครับ

3 ส่ายรูปกินมะ
23 พฤษภาคม เวลา 14:08 น.

chockcobil ๑ก๒, sutthisan ๑ก๒, OSK29560 ๑ก๒, sakza ๑ก๒, phanet ๑ก๒, สมาชิกหมายเลข 1367098 ๑ก๒, ชินวิญญ์ ๑ก๒, JokMahaKarn ๑ก๒

7 ความคิดเห็น

ความคิดเห็นที่ 1

ต่อต้านได้แบบมีเหตุผลมีงัด ทหารก็โดนตะ

สมาชิกหมายเลข 920439
23 พฤษภาคม เวลา 14:22 น.

๑ 2 ความคิดเห็น

Beneath is a full translation of this message, which was posted on 23rd May 2014:

Please help save Pantip

Currently, there is an increased number of anti-army threads. I am afraid that Pantip may be affected by the comments of those who are not aware of what to do. In the past, the Ratchadamnoen Room has been the space where we freely share political views under the law. So, we need to maintain the room's atmosphere.

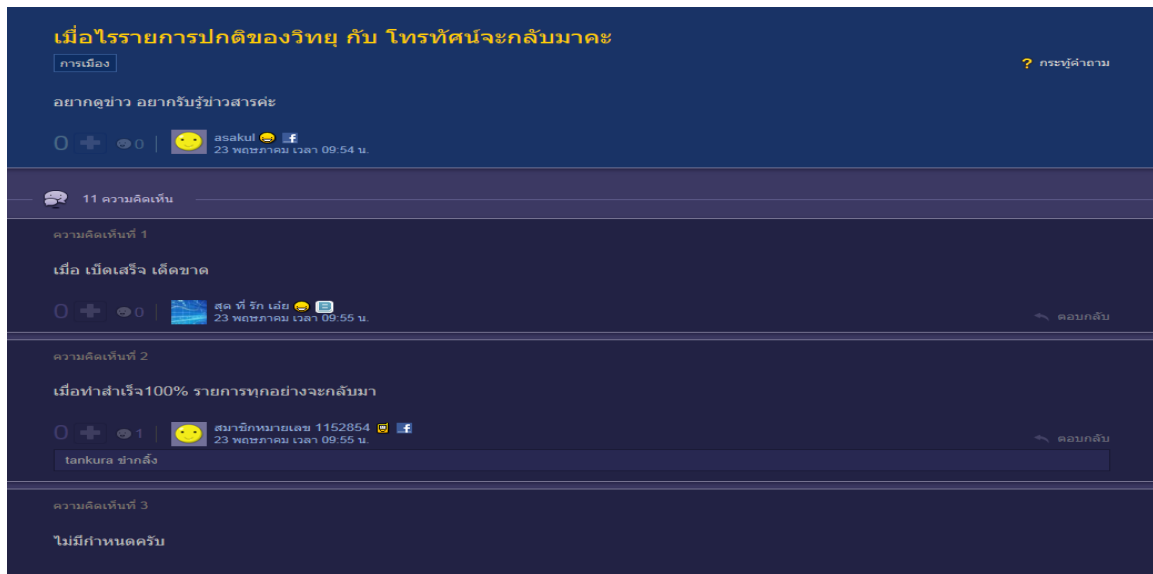
However, there are some groups trying to post anti-army messages and the webmaster needs to work hard so as to delete such threads. So, we need your cooperation in reporting about topics that are against the Army, the orders of the Army, or that stimulate conflict, by requesting the deletion of messages by the webmaster urgently, in order to prevent photo saving, information duplication, and the dissemination of such information that may create turbulence in the country.

For your kind consideration.

Source: <http://pantip.com/topic/32093876>

Pantip's other roles during the recent coup d'état in Thailand are as follows;

- It was a channel through which to express concern and anxiety.

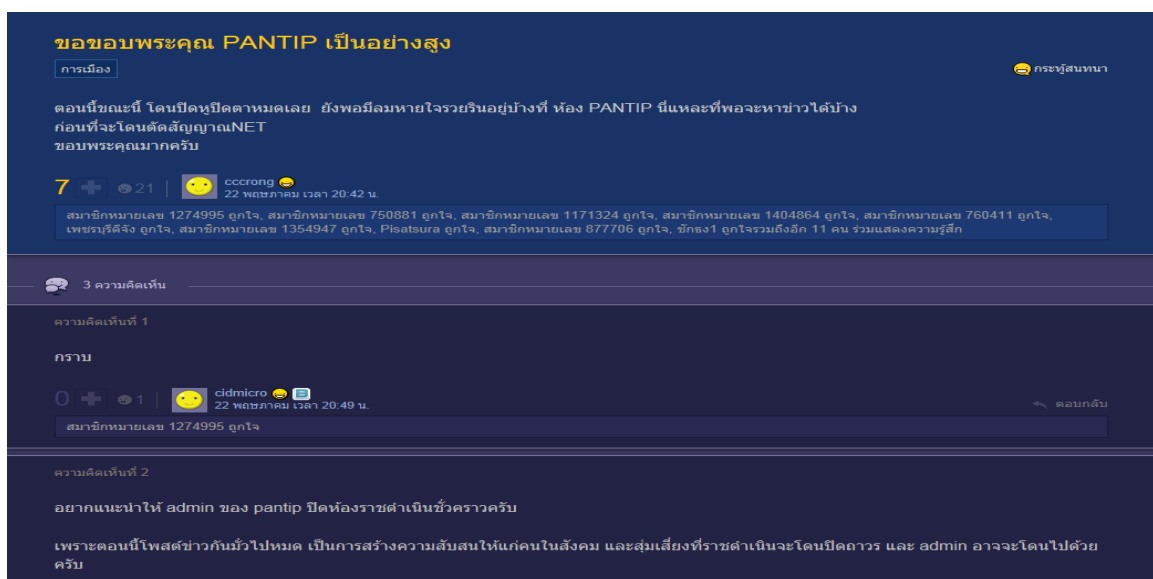


Beneath is a full translation of this message, which was posted on 23rd May 2014:

When will normal programmes on radio and television resume?
I want to watch news. I want to get information.

Source: <http://pantip.com/topic/32092499>

- It was a channel through which to get alternative information while the broadcast media were suspended.



A full translation of the above original message, which was posted on 22nd May 2014:

Highly appreciate Pantip.

Right now our eyes and ears are covered, but we survive as we get news from Pantip before the Internet connection is cut.

Thank you very much.

Source: <http://pantip.com/topic/32090231>

- It was a channel through which to reclaim justice for other types of media.



A full translation of this original message, which was posted on 28th May 2014:

☆☆☆☆☆ We want Facebook back ☆☆☆☆☆

Support for the return of Facebook.

Myanmar is ahead of us. It's embarrassing.

Source: <http://pantip.com/topic/32117829>

1.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF, AND INTEREST IN, THE RESEARCH

Given its centrality to Thai society, the print media remain “one of the principal sites of political contestation...vibrant and energetic” (McCargo, 2000, p. 1). However, any consideration of the media environment in Thailand must take particular account of its place in the political culture of the country. Since the nineteenth century, the Thai government has provided telecommunications services on the basis of a state monopoly. The introduction of radio in the 1920s, and of television in the 1950s, reflected not only the centrality of the government to Thailand’s adoption of the technology, but also the groundwork for pervasive state control of broadcasting (Woodier, 2008, p. 189). However, the Internet has provided an accessible public space for the expression of opposition, and has revealed how Thais use communication technology in various ways when access to traditional media is cut off during unrest in the country (Woodier, *ibid.*, p. 196).

In relation to information and communication technology in Thailand, the rapid development of broadband services has driven the development of the technological infrastructure in the country. The Ministry of Information and Communication Technology announced the Thailand IPv6 Development Plan⁵ which aimed to make the next generation Internet Protocol (IP) available in the country by 2010. Moreover, Thai telecommunication operators are also planning the introduction of broadband wireless services such as 3G, WiMAX, and High Speed Packet Access

⁵ IPv6 (Internet Protocol version 6), which extends IP addresses from 32 bits to 128 bits, is expected to solve the shortage of Internet address space that is currently associated with the 20-year-old Internet Protocol version 4 (IPv4) (Thaweesak *et al.*, 2009, p. 342).

(HSPA). As far as the ICT-related industries and digital content are concerned, Thailand has been the world's largest exporter of hard disc drives (HDD) and supplied parts since 2005, with more than a 40 percent share of the world market. Information and knowledge exchange channels are now widely used.

So far, however, there has been little discussion, both locally and internationally, about new media consumption in Thailand, about how and why it is used and who is using it. The latest evidence shows that the total Thai population, from the 2012 registration record was 64.45 million (National Statistical Office, 2013, p. 11). The number of households connected to the Internet was 3.70 million (National Statistical Office, *ibid.*, p. 410). Moreover, Thai Internet users spend approximately seven hours per day on the World Wide Web, and searching for information, as well as reading news, are their main activities (Electronic Transactions Development Agency, 2014). The Internet forum-related data in the country is outlined below:

Table 1.3 The use of online news services in Thailand

(Adapted from the raw data of the National Electronics and Computer Technology Centre, 2009, p. 95)

<i>Ranking</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	To read news on web boards	93.9
2	To read news in electronic newspapers	87.1
3	To read news in blogs	68.7
4	To write and criticise news	61.9
5	To read news on social networking websites	57.4

Table 1.4 The use of online news content in Thailand

(Adapted from the raw data of the National Electronics and Computer Technology Centre, *ibid.*, p. 102)

<i>Ranking</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	Political news	35.7
2	Social news	20.0
3	Entertainment news	17.1
4	Technological news	10.0
5	Business news	8.9

It can be seen from the data in Table 1.3 that reading news on web boards represents Thai Internet users' main use of online news service (93.9%). Political news is the main content read by people (35.7%), as shown in Table 1.4. However, this data is unsatisfactory as it has not dealt with the posting practices and their effects with respect to the journalistic practices of Thai mainstream news media journalists. Despite the rapid development of broadband services and the remarkable growth of Internet access, little is known about how Thais participate in Internet fora or about what their posting activities are. According to Vikanda and Nuchada (2009), evidence on the use of new media technology in Thailand is at a preliminary stage, and research on Internet usage behaviour is still limited in the academic field. (p. 71). For this reason, this study provides an initial attempt to fill some of these knowledge gaps in the field of online communication and new media studies through an investigation of Pantip.

This research will examine the practices of news participants in Pantip's conversation threads. Particular attention is given to investigating how they participate in the processes of fact-checking, and the analyzing, reporting and dissemination of information, which is a task "reserved almost exclusively to the news media" (Lasica, 2003, p. 71). This study is interesting and important owing to the quality of this Internet forum. Pantip has the potential to be an alternative online news medium for Internet users and to be a source of information for professional journalists in Thailand. However, the productions of online content by Pantip's users and its reproduction by mainstream media journalists, and vice versa, have not yet been investigated. Moreover, previous studies in the past decade have overlooked the journalistic practices of the Internet forum. Some researchers, for example, have analysed political conversation and democratic communication in the Web-based forum (Freelon, 2010; Tanner, 2001); the reactions to, and the negative effect of, the Japanese Internet forum (Kaigo and Watanabe, 2007); and the deliberative function of electronic bulletin boards in relation to health (Cohen and Raymond, 2011). Nonetheless, again, researchers have failed to prove the authority of these online media over news organisations.

It was mentioned earlier that there has been much evidence to show that Pantip can control the national news agenda. Sreberny and Khiabany (2010) acknowledge that the active roles of Internet users as news reporters, agenda-setters, fact-checkers and gate-keepers - which have recently given rise to the widespread concept of "citizen journalism" in the new media system - are liable to contest the essential prototype of professional journalism. As a result, another reason that makes this research both interesting and important is that Pantip is one of the possible ways to empower

Thai citizens. Moreover, the key problem in the current state of knowledge is that the Internet forum is only seen as being a unique form of communication. Its role and functions as a medium for people's empowerment seems to have been neglected by media scholars.

As far as the researcher is aware, it is believed that this project may be the first analysis of an Internet forum in relation to the concept of participatory journalism in Thailand. The significance of the possible results is that this research will spotlight the structural, functional and dynamic aspects of participatory journalism in Pantip. Furthermore, the results of this study will offer on understanding of the nature of the emergence of alternative online news media in Thailand and will shed light on the value of the Thai Internet forum for the current state of the knowledge of social media and of computer-mediated communication.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study is designed to investigate news participation in Pantip from three aspects, which also form the objectives of this study. To begin to address these aspects, that is to say, the investigation of the content, the content creators, and the impact of content, the research poses the following questions.

1. How do Pantip's users manipulate their power in the forum?

This question is used to investigate Pantip's content, which is what the discourse in the debate threads is. A freedom to express views and to share information in the forum is considered in this study to be the power of Pantip's users. The interesting point is to discover how this power is manipulated in threads where there are interactions among the forum's participants; namely, the thread starter, who posts the news as an original message, and the thread readers, who provide comments on that news and sometimes on the thread starter's thoughts. The aim is to analyse the use of intertextuality, and the socio-cultural and discursive practices of the comment writers. Moreover, it is anticipated that their personal attitudes to Thai society will be discovered.

2. Why do the Internet forum users participate on the site?

3. What are the practices and netiquettes that are performed in the debate, and in response to the coverage which Internet forum users have taken from mainstream news media?

4. What are the roles that the Internet forum users have played for mainstream news media?

These three questions are employed in the investigation of the content creators. Pantip users will be invited to focus groups in order to discover their reasons for using this website and the processes for posting news in the forum. Furthermore, it will discover the practices of news discussion, as well as their perspectives on their role, identity, and the news media in Thailand. Theoretical concepts relating to Internet fora and participatory journalism play a key role in the analysis method, which is likely to lead to some interesting results. In short, the aim of this investigation is to illuminate the possibilities for a Thai Internet forum to be a tool for social change.

Importantly, it attempts to justify whether news participation in Pantip can be regarded as a social movement, and whether Pantip users can be interpreted as being a part of civil society.

5. To what extent do journalists in the mainstream news media pay attention to information in the Internet fora?
6. How do the users' practices in the Internet forum challenge the journalistic practices of the mainstream news media?
7. To what extent do journalists in mainstream news media accept the Internet forum users as their helpers in news reporting?

This set of research questions focuses on the investigation of the impact of Pantip's content on Thai mainstream journalism. Interviews will be conducted with professional journalists who work in national news organisation. The main aim is to evaluate the influence of Pantip on mainstream news content, as well as on the journalistic practices of news practitioners. The hypothesis that will be tested is that if journalists pay a lot of attention to Pantip and also rely on information provided by ordinary people in the forum, then it can be verified that Pantip is a powerful tool for civic empowerment and democratisation. Apart from this interesting point, the relevant findings will assist in developing an understanding of participatory journalism in a Thai Internet forum.

1.5 THESIS OUTLINE

The overall structure of the thesis takes the form of nine chapters, including this introductory chapter. Chapter Two is concerned with the historical contextualisation of the study. It provides relevant background information about news media and the Internet in Thailand, and the dynamics of participation in Thailand. Chapter Three begins by laying out the theoretical dimensions of the research and critically addresses previous studies. Chapter Four discusses the methodologies used in the investigation. Sample selection, and the approach to data collection and analysis are thoroughly explained.

The three chapters, that follow, present the findings of the study, highlighting the three key themes and seven research questions that were previously identified in this chapter. Chapter Five reveals the results of the discourse analysis. In Chapter Six, the results from the focus group discussions and the demographic information relating to the Pantip users in the study are identified. Chapter Seven shows the results of interviews with journalists. Chapter Eight integrates all of the research findings, provides a critique of them, and ties up the various theoretical and empirical strands. Finally, the conclusion in Chapter Nine explains the limitations of this current study, and it includes a discussion on the implications of the findings with regard to future research in this area. Importantly, it gives a brief summary of the study in order to illustrate the importance of Pantip in Thai society and the characteristics of the news participation in Thai Internet forum.

In conclusion, this introductory chapter presents the focus, rationale, and the interests of the research. Throughout the thesis, the word Pantip will be used to refer to the case study site, which is Thailand's Internet forum, Pantip.com. It is not only one of the biggest Thai-language websites, in terms of online participation for the sharing of information and the exchange of views, but it is also one of the most influential of the citizen media that represent the public mood and societal debate on a wide variety of current affairs. However, far too little attention has been paid to the potential role of the Internet forum as a tool for civic empowerment and democratisation. In Internet studies in Thailand, especially, the academic discussion on the use of online communication technology, as well as online behaviour is at an early stage. Moreover, in relation to Pantip, it is not yet clear who the site users are, and what their reasons for using the forum are.

In highlighting the empirical evidence about the role of Pantip in the Thai mainstream news media, this research project investigates news discussion in Pantip's *News Talk* threads. The study seeks to examine Pantip through three aspects: its content, its content creators, and the impact of the content. These three parts of the examination also act as the objectives of the study. Seven research questions have been established and three methodologies. These include discourse analysis, focus groups, and interviews, and they will be employed in order to deliver the answers to the questions. It is expected that the results will enhance the understanding of online news participation in Thailand. Furthermore, the impact of Pantip on Thai mainstream journalism can be fully identified.

The next chapter will present the historical contextualisation of the research. This includes a brief history of Thailand and other important matters that are involved with this project.

CHAPTER 2

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE RESEARCH

Formerly known as Siam, the Kingdom of Thailand began its history in the North and Central regions of the country in the 13th Century with the name *Sukhothai*. The Sukhothai period is credited with developing the modern Thai alphabet, and also an ideal of the Thai state in a land of plenty governed by paternal and benevolent kings. However, the more powerful neighbouring kingdom in the central plains, *Ayutthaya*, gradually exerted its influence from the mid 14th Century onwards, and it eventually dominated the region for the next four hundred years with an absolute monarchy.

After the city was invaded and burned by the Burmese armies in 1767, the Ayutthaya royal line was extinguished and the territory was split. General Taksin managed to reunite Siam from his new capital, *Thonburi*, modern-day Bangkok, and he declared himself king in 1769. The Chakri Dynasty was established by General Chakri (King Rama I) in 1782 after the death of Taksin. The *Rattanakosin* period then began and has continued until the current monarch, King Rama IX. The Siamese revolution, which was led by a group of young military officers and bureaucrats, transformed the country from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy in 1932. The form of the government has ranged from being an authoritarian regime to being an electoral democracy from time to time; with popular protests against the military dictatorship in 1973 and 1992, and several coups d'état, one of which took place recently in 2014.

At the beginning, this chapter provides an overview of Thai history in a nutshell. Although the information is noticeably short and is taken from the tourism websites including the Tourism Authority of Thailand and Lonely Planet, it is a good illustration of how past events shape the Thai contemporary life and culture. Perceiving history not only helps to understand the complex society today, but it also helps to predict trends and projections. In Thailand, it can be said that the monarch and the military are two institutions that have played an eminent role in politics and media. Since the Siamese revolution, however, the Thai media have periodically been determined by the dictators and the elected governments, which, at the same time, perform as the owners, users and controllers of the media, from which they benefit.

In order to understand the role and impact of Pantip on Thai society, therefore, the research's historical context must illustrate the matters that are relevant and that are also found to be useful for the analysis. It begins with the inauguration of news media and the Internet in the country, with a concentration on the use, as well as the problems of usage. Then the key actors in Thai political relations are introduced. These include the middle class and civil society. The dynamics of their participation in Thai socio-political activities are highlighted in the final section.

2.1 NEWS MEDIA IN THAILAND: STATE AND BUSINESS

From his viewpoint, expressed in the anniversary edition to celebrate Thai Journalists' Day, Pradit (2014), the President of the Thai Journalists' Association, points out that Thai news professionals have undergone several challenges. The most important ones began when Thailand's National Broadcast and Telecommunications' Commissions announced a phenomenal transition in the broadcasting industry from the terrestrial platform to digitalisation, which has resulted in a proliferation of television channels, content, and media conglomerates. The challenge also derives from the advancement in technology that allows Thai audiences to receive news from the different types of screen media at the same time, for instance, on television, smartphone, computer, or laptop. As a consequence, Thai journalists have had to improve their working skills to support all of the platforms, both in traditional media and in the online ones (p. 5). However, from a researcher's viewpoint, a big challenge for those who work in the Thai media, especially in the news industry, is neither technological progress nor the audiences' behaviour. Conversely, it is a way that journalists can stay independent of the business model and state ownership, which are two of the major influences on fairness and accuracy in news reporting. In this study, business model simply refers to the way in which news organisations generate revenue and make a profit from operations. That is to say, advertising and sponsor are a main focus for their economic survival. In order to illustrate these influences, the following section presents background information from

two mainstream news media in Thailand; these are the newspapers and television. Their roles and external effects in relation to the news ecology will also be highlighted.

The newspaper in Thailand

The evolution of publishing in Thailand began in the reign of King Rama III (reigned 1824-1851). The first publication was *The Bangkok Recorder*, which was published by the American missionary, Dan B. Bradley, in both Thai and English to spread Christianity. Bradley was both the owner and editor of the newspaper. Another publication was written and published later by King Rama IV (reigned 1851-1868) to inform the public about his administration, as well as to counteract critiques in *The Bangkok Recorder*. The newspaper industry took its form in the reign of King Rama V (reigned 1868-1910) when such publications were found to be both clearly scheduled and widely distributed. Higher interest in current affairs among Thai citizens resulted in up to 59 different publications. Meanwhile, the first newspaper that was written and published by ordinary people, with cynical content regarding social and political issues, became very popular. The printing and newspaper industries continued to grow in the reign of Kings Rama VI (reigned 1910-1925) and VII (reigned 1925-1935). People could express views freely, and the newspaper was considered to be an influential medium, especially among intellectuals who had the idea of changing the country's regime (Salao, 2001).

Thai politics after the 1932 revolution was filled with conflicts and instability. Journalists could also be classified into three groups in relation to their advocacy. These groups included non-partisanship, military government, and royalists. Newspapers were strictly controlled and monitored under the administrations of several Thai Prime Ministers between 1938 and 1973. A law depriving journalists of free speech was also enacted. Some newspapers were ordered to shut down, while many others began to focus more on sensationalist stories, or to provide entertaining content. However, after the 1973 student-led uprising, which resulted in the end of the ruling military dictatorship, the newspapers resumed their role as the medium for public interests. Several newspapers that emphasize political issues were also revived. Furthermore, tremendous economic growth in the country in the 1990s was a turning point that brought publishers the insight for coverage of economic news, as well as providing more content for the diverse stories. Newspapers became commercialised and they were listed in as public companies on the stock market, and more spaces were created in the papers exclusively for the advertisements (Thai Journalists' Association, 2008). Remarkably, the freedom of the Thai press was affirmed in the 2007 Constitution. The Printing Notification Act, 2007, also stated that the censoring or shutting down of publishing houses by government officials is prohibited.

Today, all of the major newspapers in Thailand are owned by private organisations, meaning that they are not subject to close government supervision and they can be considered one of the freest of the traditional news media if compared to the broadcasting. Moreover, almost all of the newspapers, except for the regional or local ones, are published in Bangkok and distributed to all parts of the country with

a very cheap sale price. As a result, newspapers are of considerable importance, with a great influence over Thais' daily life. Readers have numerous choices, from the sensationalist mass-circulation papers to those specialising in political coverage, business, and sports. There is no up-to-date record of the number of different print media that exist, yet information from the Newspapers' Association of Thailand (now the Thai Journalists' Association) in 2000 (cited in Pirongrong, 2003, p. 292) reports that there were 123 typographies altogether in three types of organisation; which consist of 80 private commercial newspapers, 28 national newspapers, and 15 professional associations. Table 2.1 illustrates the example of the national newspapers, according to their target groups and specialisation.

Table 2.1 Types of newspapers in Thailand

(Note: Some also provide an online version along with the paper format)

<i>Type</i>	<i>Name</i>
Sensationalist mass circulation dailies	e.g. <i>Thairath</i> , <i>Daily News</i> , <i>Kom Chad Luek</i>
Quality dailies	e.g. <i>Matichon</i> , <i>Thai Post</i> , <i>Naew Na</i>
Foreign-language newspapers -English -Chinese -Japanese	e.g. <i>Bangkok Post</i> , <i>The Nation</i> e.g. <i>Sing Sian Yer Pao</i> e.g. <i>Bangkok Shuho</i> (weekly)
Business newspapers	e.g. <i>Krungthep Thurakij</i> , <i>Than Sethakij</i> (tri-daily), <i>Talad Vikraoh</i> (bi-weekly)
Sport newspapers	e.g. <i>Siam Keela</i> , <i>Star Soccer</i>
Entertainment newspapers	e.g. <i>Dara Daily</i> , <i>Siam Bantoeng</i> (tri-daily)
Local newspapers -Thai -English -Russian -German	e.g. <i>Chiang Mai News</i> , <i>Thang Thai</i> (bi-weekly) e.g. <i>The Korat Post</i> (monthly) e.g. <i>НОВОСТИ Пхукета</i> (<i>Novosti Pkhuketa</i> - weekly) e.g. <i>Pattaya Blatt</i> (bi-weekly)

There are also a few weekly newsmagazines, such as the *Matichon Weekly* and the *Nation Weekend*, which are published by the same companies as their daily counterparts. However, the Thai print industry organisations is usually run by a single family or by a small groups of investors who share a close relationship, as far as the ownership is concerned. Moreover, some big companies, for example, *Vacharaphol*, *Matichon Public Company*, and the *Nation Multimedia Group*, are dominated by conglomerates and cross-media businesses, including television channels, books, magazines, and web content. Table 2.2 provides the ownership details of four of the leading Thai newspapers.

Table 2.2 Ownership details of four of the leading Thai newspapers

Name	The date of first issue	Company details
<i>Thairath</i>	25 December 1962	Founded by Kampol Vacahraphol, <i>Thairath</i> has been the largest-selling Thai newspaper for decades, with one million copies daily. Today, it is a publication of the <i>Vacharaphol Company Limited</i> , which also runs online media and electronic news business as well as a television channel (a variety programme), with its subsidiaries, <i>Trend VG3</i> and <i>Triple V Broadcast</i> .
<i>Daily News</i>	28 March 1964	With its familiar slogan “Read facts, Read <i>Daily News</i> ”, this newspaper is the second largest of the dailies circulated in Thailand, with 900,000 copies per day. Founded by Saeng Hetrakool, today <i>Si-Phraya Publishing Company Limited</i> also runs the news channel, News TV.
<i>Matichon</i>	No information	<i>Matichon</i> was founded on 18 th January 1978 by a group of writers and columnists, e.g. Khanchai Bunpan and Pongsak Payakawichian. It registered with Thailand’s Stock Exchange in 1989 and became a <i>Public Limited Company</i> in 1993. Now it has two subsidiaries operating publishing houses and several publications; including books and magazines.
<i>Siamrath</i>	25 June 1950	Founded by Mom Rajawongse Kukrit Pramoj, a former Prime Minister of Thailand, and Sala Likitkul, <i>Siamrath</i> is the oldest existing Thai-language newspaper. Today, it is managed by the <i>Siamrath Company Limited</i> , which also publishes a weekly newsmagazine.

Television in Thailand

Thai television started following a notice written by the Prime Minister, Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram, sent to the Director General of the Advertising Department (now the government's Public Relations Department- researcher) in October 1950. This notice functioned as his command to set up a TV station in the country. Sinit (1992) wrote that three factors were involved in this command. The "social factor" referred to the desire of some Thai media professionals who were keen to advance the mass communications' medium in Thailand by convincing the government to acquire a TV station (p. 14). In relation to the "economic factor", after World War II, there was the obvious emergence of transnational corporations. Western telecommunication companies, especially those from the USA, started to build a relationship with the Thai government, aiming to sell broadcasting equipment and to establish radio stations for their own purposes in Thailand (pp. 17-19). The "political factor" relates to domestic turmoil and political volatility. During their ruling period, the military dictatorship had occasionally drawn criticism from the press, which resulted in the highest degree of news censorship, and the intimidation and detention of journalists (pp. 21-23). The government therefore had to tighten their public relations mechanism by increasing the number of radio stations, increasing the number of news bulletins, and accelerating the establishment of TV stations. Although it was criticised heavily about its extravagant spending in the preparation process, the first trial broadcast took place on the Prime Minister's birthday - 14th July 1952 (p. 150).

However, objections from the public were, to some extent, proven to have been successful because, in that trial year, the government transformed its TV management into a state-owned enterprise that was called the *Thai Television Company Limited*. Similarly to that success, the broadcasting system was set up smoothly. Eventually, the Thai people had the chance to watch TV for the first time in their history on 24th June 1955. Since then the popularity of TV programmes with the public increased rapidly, while the government set up additional stations, all of which are owned by government agencies until now. Sinit (*ibid.*) notes that television stations in Thailand have become not only the government's tool of self-promotion, but also their property, in the form of a state monopoly in which revenues come from the advertisements that are paid for by the private sector. Moreover, the TV frequency spectrum is not entirely used for educational purposes, as far as the objectives of service are concerned, but it is the privilege of a few wealthy businessmen. These small groups of people have abused their close relationships with politicians to win in the bidding for TV stations and to reap profit from the entertainment programmes (pp. 150-152).

In relation to the government agencies that own the frequency spectrums for television transmission in Thailand, these include the Royal Thai Army, the Mass Communication Organisation of Thailand (MCOT), and the Government Public Relations Department. These agencies operate the stations and produce news programmes themselves, while, at the same time, they allow private companies to run the broadcasting business via long-term concessions and contracts. However, the Thai television industry is on its way to becoming more competitive and transparent following the 2007 Constitution, which authorised the National Broadcasting and

Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) as an independent organisation in relation to regulation and license allocation. Whereas the existing broadcast contracts are being allowed to continue until the end of their concessions, the new entrants must apply for their licenses. Furthermore, the country's plan to digitalise nationwide free-to-air television broadcasting was also announced. As a result, NBTC set up a series of auctions in December 2013 for 24 commercial digital TV Channels. Fernquest (2014) reports that these new channels will raise the total number of digital TV channels to 48, comprising 12 public channels, 12 community channels, 7 news channels, 7 variety channels, 7 high-definition channels, and 3 children's channels. Licenses for the auction winners are now finalised. The current analogue terrestrial transmissions are scheduled to be switched off by 2017. Table 2.3 illustrates the details of the free-to-air analogue terrestrial TV providers, which are the traditional way to receive television in Thailand.

Table 2.3 Free-to-air analogue terrestrial TV providers in Thailand

(Adapted from raw data from Isriya, 2012, p. 17)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Launch date</i>	<i>Operation type</i>
Channel 3	MCOT	26 March 1970	This station is operated by the <i>Bangkok Entertainment Company Limited</i> , a subsidiary of the <i>BEC World Public Company Limited</i> , who has held the concessionaire rights granted by MCOT since the launch date. The current contract ends in 2020.

Table 2.3 Free-to-air analogue terrestrial TV providers in Thailand (continued)

Name	Owner	Launch date	Operation type
Channel 5	Royal Thai Army	25 January 1958	Several production houses rent air time for their programmes, and also share the profit from commercial advertisements with the Army. However, the Army uses Channel 5 as a tool for public relations and produces its own news programme.
Channel 7	Royal Thai Army	27 November 1967	Royal Thai Army has granted concessionaire rights to the <i>Bangkok Broadcasting and Television Company Limited</i> . This company has run the station since the launch date. The current contract ends in 2023.
Modern Nine TV	MCOT	24 June 1955	MCOT is a state enterprise registered with the Stock Exchange of Thailand as a public company. This allows it to adopt a more commercial approach to the broadcasting industry. MCOT also owns and runs Thailand's National News Agency.
NBT	The Government Public Relations Department	11 July 1988	National Broadcasting Service of Thailand is under the full control of the government, which is also the station's funder. Their programmes are mostly produced by in-house crews.
Thai PBS	Thai PBS	15 January 2008	The Thai Public Broadcasting Service is an independent state agency, and gets its annual revenue from a percentage of Thailand's sin taxes, which are taxes on alcohol and tobacco.

As far as television news programmes in Thailand are concerned, they can be considered one of the most important means for public awareness of current events in Thai society, where illiteracy remains widespread. The proliferation of TV news consumption emerged in 1988, when almost every free-to-air terrestrial TV channel increased its air time for news bulletins. Viewers had the options to watch news during different periods throughout the day, in addition to the regular prime time evening show. New news shows, especially in the morning, were very popular. This trend not only transformed Thai viewers' behavior from reading the newspapers and listening to the radio to watching the news on television, but it also became a new source of revenue for the television stations. Producers also needed to compete among themselves in terms of the quality, speed, and reliability of their coverage. These factors resulted in progress in news reporting in Thailand (Duangtip, 1989, p. 135). The following section presents brief details about some of the leading TV news producers.

Channel 3 News Department began its broadcasting on 1st April 1986, after MCOT, the station owner, allowed Channel 3 to produce a news programme and to air it on its channel. In 2003, the programme format was changed from being a traditional bulletin read by anchors, to being a “news story telling”, delivered by the communicative presenters. The aims were to make news more casual and easier to understand. “*Family News 3*”, which is the representation of all of the news shows and presenters, is the highlight of the station and is the strength of its business venture. *This Morning's Stories*, aired on weekdays from 6:00 to 9:30am, is apparently one of the most popular morning shows in Thailand.

Thai PBS was established by the Thai Public Broadcasting Service Act 2008 (B.E. 2551), which allows this organisation to hold the status of a state agency with a legal personality, but which is not a government agency or a state enterprise. Its main missions are to develop the quality of life and to promote moral values in the society through production of educational and entertaining programmes with a balanced proportion between the two. In addition, the content must be free of political bias and commercial benefits.

The *Nation Broadcasting Corporation Public Company Limited* (NBC) is a radio and television network which is a subsidiary of the *Nation Multimedia Group*, one of the biggest media conglomerates in the country. Launched in 2000, *Nation TV* is Thailand's first 24-hour news channel, and it can be viewed via satellite and digital terrestrial television, as well as on social media and application software.

The *Thai News Network 24* (TNN24) is also a 24-hour news station. It is runs by the monopoly provider of cable television in Thailand, *True Visions Public Company Limited* which is one of many subsidiaries of the *Charoen Pokphand Group (CP)*, Thailand's largest private company and one of Asia's largest conglomerates. First on air on 1st January 2008, TNN24 aims to provide news with complete journalism ethics and standards.

It is clear from the above illustration that Thai broadcast media are established for two main purposes; state promotion and commercial profitability. Excluding Thai PBS and NBT, all of the media organisations in Thailand are involved in a business model. Although many of them guarantee journalistic standards in their news production, small or large scale intervention is presumably unavoidable. The Thai Journalists' Association (2014) reported that governments endeavour to intervene in the work of the news media because they are an effective means of mass communication. Governments employ them as a tool with which to convince the public to agree with their policies and administration, as well as to cultivate their positive image, which is crucial for political stability. Since the arrival of the news media in the country, intervention has been found in six ways, as follows (pp. 13-14):

- Reduction or suspension of the advertising budget;
- Building a good relationship with news practitioners and applying informal requests for a lower degree of investigative stories or serious coverage;
- Buying the shares of listed media corporations in the stock market to exercise their power as a shareholder in order to control news content;
- Using their direct power as authorised officials to scrutinise media business owners and journalists' financial transactions;
- Enacting legislation to give the state the authority to check news content prior to publication or using the law and court processes as a threat, for instance, through litigation, impeachment for defamation, and;
- Using concessions as a tool for negotiation, if the media do not comply with state requirements, meaning that new contracts may not be granted.

On the one hand, the degree of state intervention in the news media has become lower since freedom of expression was declared in the 1997 and 2007 Constitutions. On the other hand, the business model is more influential in the news industry. Pongpipat and Nattawut (2014) remark that independence is one of the journalistic ideals of news reporting, and the editorial board must be free from outside control, for instance that from the sales department. After the 1997 Asian financial crisis, however, business survival took priority over anything else in the news organisation. Sponsorship has become predominantly the work of editors. They stress that: “today news is a commodity. The customers are no longer readers, but it is the private enterprises that pay to promote their product or service in newspapers” (p. 17). As a consequence, Thai media specialists and the Chairperson of the National Press Council agree that nature of news in Thailand is changed. The coverage of investigative stories is scarce and not as intense as it used to be. In addition, some stories blur the differences between “facts” and “public relations”. One shocking phenomenon recently was that the front page of a national newspaper, which is the most important area for news presentation, was entirely wrapped by the display advertising paper (p.18).

2.2 THE INTERNET IN THAILAND: A HISTORICAL BRIEF

The development of the computer network in Thailand has begun, since the country lacked the primary tools to create a network for communication; the popularity of the telephone was low; the knowledge of the related technologies was very low; and computers were very expensive. However, Thailand was among the first countries in Asia to have the internet. The dedication of certain Thai engineers, together with

the wide vision of a small group of university lecturers, resulted in the emergence of a computer network for academic purposes in 1986 (Sirin *et al.*, 1999, p. 7). Professor Kanchana Kanchanasut, the Director of the Internet Education and Research Laboratory at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) and the first Thai electronic mail user, recalled her past experience. After her graduation from the University of Melbourne, Australia, she returned to Thailand. One problem that she encountered was a lack of cheap communication tools with which to reach her overseas friends. She thus collaborated with her Japanese colleague, who was also a lecturer at AIT, to create a simple computer network by using any of the devices that were available at that time. Then they chose to use Thaipak, which is the X.25 service through phone lines provided by the Communication Authority of Thailand. Thaipak allowed Kanchana to be able to use the UUCP program to respond to the e-mail and digital data through the servers of the University of Tokyo and the University of Melbourne. Shortly after that, they successfully developed the UUCP system to connect with an internet service provider, UUNET, in Virginia, USA. E-mail was not only used for teaching at AIT, but also as a medium for colloquia with Thailand's neighbouring countries (Sirin *et al.*, *ibid.*, pp. 9-10).

In 1988, Australia introduced The International Development Plan, a project that collaborated with three Thai universities: Prince of Songkla, Chalalongkorn, and AIT, to develop the first Thai computer network. This was called the Thai Computer Science Network, or TCSNet for short. Prince of Songkla University and AIT are a connection gateway between Thailand and the server of the University of Melbourne, whereas the University of Melbourne is the connection gateway through which to receive and

send e-mail to the USA and other countries in Southeast Asia. The device for e-mail exchange with Australia was a UNIX system server and land lines that could be used for international calls to such a server in Melbourne. All e-mails that were sent to Thailand were first gathered at the University of Melbourne before being forwarded to Thailand via 2 centres; which are at Prince of Songkla University and at AIT. Prince of Songkla University dealt with its own e-mails, but AIT was responsible for forwarding all of the e-mails with addresses ending with '.th' to various destinations in the country. The development of this UNIX system generated the popularity of using e-mail among Thai academics. Those working outside the TCSNet network could also use this service through the server at AIT, which was available throughout the day and free of charge. Professor Kanchana said that during that time there were approximately 50 e-mail users, who were members of mailing lists in their own research areas. The installation and establishment of the UUCP system was also encouraged in their institutions in order to expand the online communication network in Thailand (Kanchana and Pensri, 1992, cited in Sirin *et al.*, 1999, pp. 10-12).

In 1991 Dr. Thaweesak Koanantakool, a lecturer from the Faculty of Engineering, installed the MHSNet program at Thammasat University. Developed by the Message Handling Systems Pty Ltd. in Australia, this program was more advance than the UUCP system and simpler to use, it can also receive and send e-mail, documents, databases, and software to other computer users all over the world. For this reason, Thammasat became a new e-mail hub for Thailand. Its function was to exchange digital information with Australia by using MSHNet, and with other local universities by using the UUCP system. This network not only featured in

universities in the TCSNet networks, but also new members, Kasetsart University and Thailand's National Electronics and Computer Technology Centre (NECTEC). The advance of this new communication technology encouraged Thai academics to use e-mail, which eventually became a common means of communication in their everyday life. Besides the MHSNet system, NECTEC also developed another network, the Inter-University Network, on X.25. Yet both networks merged as a result of a collaboration project that aimed to connect all of the Thai networks to international ones. The MHSNet system was employed for about a year while Thailand prepared for a new network that would support the Internet Protocol. Thaweesak pointed out that the UUCP is only a tiny part of the computer-network capacity. Although it is cheap, it is not suitable for worldwide interaction (Thaweesak, Interviewed, cited in Sirin *et al.*, *ibid.*, p. 14).

The merging of the network in the MHSNet system and X.25 in 1992 also resulted in the arrival of ThaiSARN (Thai Social/Scientific Academic and Research Network). As its name suggests, it is an alliance of computer centres in many Thai universities. Remarkably, SARN means "data" in Thai. This network was funded by the Thai government and obtained technical support from NECTEC. ThaiSARN expanded its network rapidly within its first year owing to support from multinational information technology enterprises in Bangkok, such as IBM (Thailand), Digital Equipment Corporation (Thailand), and Hewlett Packard (Thailand). In addition, while ThaiSARN had neither internationally leased circuits nor a local centre for data exchange, these companies set up two independent nodes locally: hp2hpth.com and decth.co.th, to transfer data among academic, government, and private organisations in

Thailand. Data from these two nodes travel across continents to the head office of those computer companies in the USA. After that, they were transferred back to their destinations in Bangkok. These nodes were removed when ThaiSARN had its first internet connection cable in 1992, (Trin *et al.*, 1994, cited in Sirin *et al.*, *ibid.*, p. 15).

In late 1992, Chulalongkorn University bought a 9.6Kbps cable from the Communications Authority of Thailand in order to connect with the UUNET Company in the USA. This connection brought a new academic network, ThaiNet, which was composed of AIT, Chiang Mai University and Assumption University. At the same time, Chulalongkorn University also allowed members of ThaiSARN to use this connection cable through NECTEC. The transition of computer network from UUCP to Internet Protocol was also accomplished smoothly because of the teamwork among Thai computer engineers. During this transfer, around a hundred e-mail users in the UUCP system had to become acclimatised to a new experience of the Internet Protocol, whereas new users had to become familiarized with the technology and to start to use it right away (Thaweesak, Interviewed, cited in Sirin *et al.*, *ibid.*, p. 20). Moreover, ThaiSARN's networks were increased to 23 centres in the middle of 1994. At the same time, the number of Internet users in Thailand rose dramatically from 200 in 1992 to 23,000 in 1994 when NECTEC connected the second Internet cable, 64Kbps, to UUNET. Two connection cables between Thailand and the USA, ThaiNet and ThaiSARN, were linked together by this new 64Kbps Internet cable. Thaweesak acknowledged that the success of the Internet in Thailand would not be possible without the assistance of various companions; including local and overseas

enterprises who donated computer hardware, as well as NECTEC staff and volunteers, who worked with energy and commitment (Sirin *et al.*, *ibid.*, pp. 17-20).

From academic network to commercial service and problems in Thai internet development

The average growth of the Gross National Product was 8% per year represented significant growth in Thailand's economy in the 1990s, which was also the infant period of the Thai computer network. This economic boom allowed the government to be able to advance telecommunication technology in the country. The expansion of fibre-optic, submarine cable, commercial satellite, and landlines co-invested by the public and private sectors were important infrastructure for Internet access among the Thai people. (Sirin *et al.*, *ibid.*, p. 51). A commercial service for Thai Internet was introduced in 1995 by the *Internet Thailand Public Company Limited*, a partnership of the Telephone Organisation of Thailand (currently this is the TOT Public Company Limited), the Communications Authority of Thailand (currently CAT Telecom Public Company Limited) and the National Science and Technology Development Agency. Moreover, computer business was promoted by the government in terms of the reduction of import tariffs for its hardware. Several news organisations also applied the use of websites as another platform for their coverage. The daily English-language newspaper, *The Bangkok Post*, reported general election results live on the Internet in 1995. In the same year, while native Thai people could observe the solar eclipse on a website that was especially arranged for this event, Thai expatriates began to follow news from their home country through the Internet. In addition, ThaiSARN received a grant from

Japan for the first E1 leased line, which connected Thailand and the Scientific Information Network in Japan (Sirin *et al.*, *ibid.*, pp. 29-36).

However, support from the government had little impact on commercial services on the Thai Internet. It was found in 1996 that there were only 60 corporate bodies and around 100,000 individuals applying for the Internet service that was provided by the *Internet Thailand Public Company Limited*. The majority of Internet users, including the members of the ThaiSARN network, acquired free Internet access from their organisations. Only ten percent of those were willing to pay for it personally. The major problem was that the Internet fee in Thailand was exorbitant. This was because users were charged at the US dollar rate, according to Yunyong Teng-amnuay, Thai expert in telecommunication technology (Bussakorn, 1996, cited in Sirin *et al.*, *ibid.*, p. 38). The service itself was also a monopoly business with the state's intervention in the market process, according to the Thailand Development Research Institution (Somkiat and Deunden, 1997, cited in Sirin *et al.*, *ibid.*, p. 40). Moreover, penetration was low due to the English language most of the online information and computer software. Thaweesak, one of the pioneers of Thai Internet development, stated that: "Thai citizens are not comparable to Singaporean or people in other nations that use English as a second language. Therefore, Thai Internet is in an inaugural period and was restricted only to the group of users who understood English" (Thaweesak, interviewed, cited in Sirin *et al.*, *ibid.*, p. 38).

After the economic crisis in the Southeast Asian countries, as well as in Thailand in 1997, the Internet service providers and various computer hardware retailers were severely affected by the decline in product demand and the weak Thai currency. Conversely, to heal the situation, the Thai government launched a new policy to promote Internet usage by approving a 25 percent reduction in the service fees. This policy caused the Internet providers to suffer a lack of financial liquidity and eventually a shortfall in revenue, because the rent for the connection cable was still to be paid at the US dollar rate, which had doubled due to the rate of currency exchange. Thai Internet business in successive years was also affected by other factors; including law and regulations, the government budget, political instability, and corruption. These factors not only interrupted the growth of the Internet in Thailand, but also discouraged Thai Internet developers (Sirin *et al.*, *ibid.*, pp. 48-52). Nonetheless, the Ministry of ICT's Master Plan is currently a policy framework to use the Internet as a means for development, mainly in society, education, administration, industry, and trading. In addition, as a member of the World Trade Organisation, Thailand's Telecommunication Business Plan has recently been announced to ensure fair competition in the telecommunication market (Thaweesak *et al.*, 2009, p. 344).

2.3 THE SOCIO-POLITICAL USE OF THE INTERNET IN THAILAND

If considering the socio-political implications in Thailand, it is suggested that the Internet tends to be the most important passage for communication on a wide range of issues, ever since the Internet started to expand from education institutes to the people in general. In the pre-hypertext era, information exchange and communication among

Thai Internet users took place through the Bulletin Board System (BBSs), which was later developed as the web board or online forum. The numerous discussion topics are categorised into groups called newsgroup. The newsgroup member can subscribe to the news on the topic in which they are interested. They can also participate in news bulletin boards by reading and posting messages. *Soc.cul.thai* was an early cyber-community of the first Thai Internet era in the 1990s, and it was exceedingly popular among Internet-savvy citizens. Almost all of the questions relating to Thailand can find their answers in this community. Thai domestic scholars, Thai students and Thai people living in foreign countries, as well as foreigners residing either in Thailand or abroad, can exchange their information through the *Soc.cul.thai* bulletin board (Pirongrong, 2003, pp. 299-300).

However, *Soc.cul.thai* was highlighted for its most notable role during the country's political crisis in May 1992. The Internet, which had just been introduced to Thais at that time, was not in the interest of the government of the military dictatorship. This site, as a result, became online forum that was free from political intervention, whereas all of the domestic news media's content was regulated. *Soc.cul.thai* was the only communication channel through which Thai expatriates and overseas students could receive accurate information, whilst the local mainstream media were distorted and the international news networks, such as the CNN satellite signal, were blocked. Nevertheless, the images of the bloody battleground between the military and unarmed demonstrators, which had been shown to the overseas Thai audiences, were sent to their friends in Thailand by the electronic mail and by information exchange in *Soc.cul.thai* . Eventually, online pro-democracy group were emerged. In addition, there was a group of

people signing in a letter sent to the government condemning that military operation, and writing an open-sealed letter sent to the international organisations. However, these online spirits were limited only to a small élite stratum of Thai society, which included academics and well-educated people, and those with proficiency in English who could get access to expensive technology, like the Internet, at that time (Pirongrong, *ibid.*).

Following the inclusion of the Thai Internet into the World Wide Web in 1995, the country's online socio-political involvement continues to grow. Many websites open a space in which users from various backgrounds can exchange information and express political opinions. Citizen's organisations also use the Internet and various new media, which are independent and less controlled by the government, as their way to criticise the operation of the government and to arrange political movement. Apart from the local mainstream media that also circulate news content on the Internet, Pirongrong (*ibid.*, p. 301) identifies five sectors that provide online information for democratic purposes:

(1) The government and government agencies; for example,

<http://www.thaigov.go.th> (Royal Thai Government)
<http://www.parliament.go.th> (National Reform Council)
<http://www.senate.go.th> (National Legislative Assembly)

(2) Political parties; for example,

<http://www.ptp.or.th> (The ruling party, Pheu Thai, before the coup in May 2014)
<http://www.democrat.or.th> (The opposition, the Democrats, before the coup in May 2014)

(3) Independent organisations; for example,

<http://www.ect.or.th> (The Election Commission of Thailand)

<http://www.naccc.go.th> (The Office of the National Anti-Corruption Commission)

(4) Non-profit, non-governmental organisations, and civic organisations; for example,

<http://www.bannok.com> (NGO for Thailand's hill tribes and community development)

<http://www.midnightuniversity.org> (Non-government organisation for Thai democracy)

<http://www.prachachon.org> (Civic organisation advocating Thai democracy)

(5) Commercial Internet Content Providers; for example,

<http://www.pantip.com> (Political discussion in *Ratchadamnoen Room*, in particular)

<http://www.meechaithailand.com> (Political news, analyses, and forum provided by Mr. Meechai Reuchuphan, a former politician and Speaker of the House).

Although one of the important roles of the internet is as a platform for opinion expression, the possibility of the socio-political use of the Internet in Thailand depends on a number of circumstances. Pirongrong (2003, p. 310) commented that time, finance, and cultural and technical ability are the three relevant points. A survey of the National Electronics and Computer Technology Centre shows that only a small group of Thai citizens is willing to pay for an Internet connection. Most of them are online at their workplace, where such a connection has already been provided. For university students, the Internet is free of charge, both on and off campus. Alternatively, with a very cheap hourly rate of pay, cyberspace can be accessed in the Internet cafés that are available all over city centres. However, most of the customers in these shops are students and teenagers. They obviously enter the virtual world for leisure purposes, such as playing online games and chatting with friends, rather than to have a serious discussion on societal and political issues. Nevertheless, age and income status cannot affirm socio-political participation in the cyberspace.

Pirongrong (*ibid.*) also observed that the middle-class and higher stratum, who can acquire a personal Internet connection at home, may not be interested in politics and current affairs. Some maybe do, but they have no time, or they lack the cultural and technological ability for computer-mediated communication (p. 311).

Freedom of expression and regulation on the Thai Internet

According to Thailand's National Police Office, the criteria that were used to filter the Internet content include lèse-majesté, narcotics, hate groups, prostitution, animal violation, separatism and guerrilla warfare, child pornography and sexual relations with underage children, pornography and sexually explicit materials, trading in obscene and sexual objects, copyright violation and counterfeiting, and moral degradation and contradiction of Thai traditions (e.g., incest or an insult to Buddhism) (Pirongrong, 2003, p. 299). Freedom House (2012); the American non-governmental organisation that conducts research and advocacy on democracy, political freedom, and human rights, reports that in Thailand's restful situation, topics of discussion that are censored or restricted in the traditional print and broadcast media have been freely circulated on the Internet. Pornography and online gambling are the most commonly blocked websites. However, during the political crisis between 2006 and 2010, some websites publicising negative views on politics, as well as those providing criticism of the Royal family, were blocked. Moreover, 117 court orders were issued to block access to over 75,000 URLs. From this number, 57,330 URLs were blocked owing to lèse-majesté, whereas many fewer were blocked due to obscenity (16,740 URLs), illegal abortion (357 URLs), and gambling (246 URLs). The advance of information and communication

technology has strengthened Internet penetration in Thailand, yet such technology frustrates the censorship efforts of the Thai ICT Ministry. That is to say, when the site is blocked, its content will be removed to be disseminated on a new site. The users can also access them with readily available circumvention software.

Although Article 45 of the 2007 Constitution guaranteed freedom of speech, it can be seen that other laws are used to diminish free expression; including the Internal Security Act, and the Computer-related Offences Act – which is better known as the Computer Crime Law. Freedom House (2012) claims the comments of legal experts pointing out that Thailand’s 2007 (B.E. 2550) Computer Crime Law contains ambiguous language, especially around the meaning of “intention” in regard to committing crime. In addition, Article 15⁶ defines “intermediaries”, who are the content providers, webmasters and website managers, are also subject to being penalised if they allow views that violate social order and national security to be expressed on their site. As a result of this ambiguity, the website’s executive authorities have to exercise their self-judgment in relation to message removal, as well as in self-censorship in terms of policing the online content. Likewise, the ICT Minister warns that “liking” views relating to lèse-majesté on Facebook can be regarded as a breach of the Computer Crime Law, and interaction in social media must be done with caution to avoid the accusation of “distributing inappropriate material

⁶ Article 15 of the 2007 Computer-related Crime Act: “Any service provider intentionally supporting or consenting to an offence under Article 14 within a computer system under their control shall be subject to the same penalty as that imposed upon a person committing an offence under Article 14.”

indirectly.” As a result, self-censorship tends to be common among Internet users, even in informal communication with close friends.

Pirongrong (2013) endeavours to expose the effect of Article 15 of the Computer Crime Law on intermediary liability enforcement. New measures for online content regulation have been set up by the Internet intermediaries to implement indirect regulation on website users⁷. In Thailand, population registration is obligatory for all citizens and a national identification number will be issued to those who are over 15 years old. The code consists of a 13-digit string, which is a requirement when undertaking any agreement or transaction. The matching of IP addresses with this code is effortless if the inspection is made (p. 90). Interactive websites, such as online fora and chat rooms, in which IP addresses under their network have been registered, are under the surveillance of the Internet service providers. A major Internet service provider, CAT Telecom, for example, employs an Internet Data Centre as the in-house unit for regular screening of the information exchange on the online fora. If a *lèse-majesté* text is found, this unit will notify the webmaster and allow them 30 minutes to delete such a text; otherwise access to the IP address that hosts the forum will be blocked by CAT Telecom. At the same time, the operators of the Internet fora exercise self-censorship practices, especially in political fora, by monitoring

⁷ Pirongrong (2013, p. 90) suggests that these measures include:

- (1) Keeping a log file of Internet traffic, including users’ IP addresses, for 90 days;
- (2) An identification and certification clearance requirement for users of institutional servers and for subscribers to online discussion fora;
- (3) Installing filtering software at organisational servers to enable content filtering;
- (4) Setting up a 24-hour monitoring system for online discussion fora;
- (5) Incorporation of provisions of the law into codes of ethics/practice and terms of services.

online conversation on a 24 hour basis. Table 2.4 provides a summary of the politically oriented online fora in Thailand and their self-censorship practices.

Table 2.4 A summary of the politically oriented online fora in Thailand

<i>Uniform Resource Locator (URL)</i>	<i>Self-censorship practice</i>	<i>Start date</i>	<i>Current status</i>
<p>www.midnightuniv.org</p> <p><u>Key characteristic:</u></p> <p>Claiming as a virtual university, <i>Midnight University</i> is a website for free public education. It contains scholarly articles and analyses, mainly on politics, from Thai academia. Discussion forum is also provided.</p>	<p>Instead of enabling participants to post directly onto the forum, they have to send their message to the webmaster by electronic mail. Then, all messages will be refined before disseminating. This results in a major reduction in the number of website visitors, due to its read-only version and the lack of interaction among users.</p>	<p>May 2004</p>	<p>The site is no longer available. However, the alternative one, http://v1.midnightuniv.org/ is accessible, but the discussion forum is blocked by the Ministry of Information and communication Technology.</p>
<p>www.prachathaiwebboard.com</p> <p><u>Key characteristic:</u></p> <p>This discussion forum is a part of an independent, non-profit, daily online newspaper, <i>Prachathai</i>. Users can express their opinion and post a comment on various topics including politics, economics, and societal issues.</p>	<p>Lèse-majesté content is a top priority in the 24-hour monitoring of the forum. A distributed system was initiated that allowed forum participants to notify the problematic messages. Then, the webmaster will have a watch list and will eventually delete it.</p>	<p>June 2004</p>	<p>Discussion forum is now aborted.</p>

Table 2.4 A summary of the politically oriented online fora in Thailand (continued)

Uniform Resource Locator (URL)	Self-censorship practice	Start date	Current status
<p>www.pantip.com (Ratchadamnoen Room)</p> <p><u>Key characteristic:</u></p> <p>As of March 2015, there are 33 “Rooms” in this websites for 33 topics of discussion.</p> <p>Ratchadamnoen Room is served for those who want to express an opinion and post a comment on politics, political party, and government.</p>	<p>With a Thai citizen ID number in the process of registration, this can be called a “one-person-one-account regulation system.” All participants know that they are identifiable. Moreover, the webmaster holds the right to delete all postings that breach the site’s policy.</p>	<p>October 1996</p>	<p>Active</p>
<p>www.prachataalk.com</p> <p><u>Key characteristic:</u></p> <p>The site is provided for the discussion on news and political issues. However, it is problematic because there is no information about the owner or the party who is responsible for the site management. Also, the contact detail is not available. Only rules and regulations on posting a comment are presented.</p>	<p>Rules for posting messages have been set. For example, rude, destructive, and pornographic messages are prohibited. Although the threads are monitored, the site will not be responsible for any lawsuits. Any illegalities are subject to the person who posts such messages.</p>	<p>Unknown</p>	<p>Active</p>

Moreover, the so-called citizen journalism websites, such as the popular Thai journalistic blog, www.oknation.net, the reaction to Internet filtering can be seen through the codes of practice. Although each member blogger holds the code of conduct in

presenting news in their own style, the incorporated legal provision, as well as a blogging guide that is provided, becomes a framework for their self-regulation (Pirongrong, 2013, p. 91).

Regarding reaction to the Internet filtering, members of Thai civil society have exercised various strategies to deal with what they have perceived as the oppression of free speech. Online security caution is considered to be a top strategy which involves, for example, turning on the secure access feature (SSL) in Gmail; disabling the conversation-recording feature of Gtalk; applying multiple layers of password protection; taking more precautions in accepting friends on social media, posting comments, and registering personal information on the Internet fora. Campaigning for local and international support is conducted by several rights-based groups that call for Thai online liberty and that supports arrestees, such as the most obvious case, that of Chiranuch Premchaiporn⁸. Civil society organisations also raise public awareness about the online restrictions in Thailand through public education and symposia. Policy lobbying is also performed by submitting an open letter to the Thai Prime Minister demanding an amendment of the law. However, some NGOs and activists, such as the National Human Rights Commission, are ambivalent about Internet filtering in Thailand as an infringement of human rights. Beyond this point, the Chairperson of the Commission on Freedom and Consumer Protection Issues of

⁸ Chiranuch Premchaiporn is webmaster of the independent online newspaper, www.prachathai.org, and a founding member of the Thai Netizen Network, the prominent online freedom advocacy group. She was arrested in March 2009 and again in November 2010, because it was found that lèse-majesté comments were posted in a forum on her website. Many local and international human rights organisations launched a campaign to free her. Worldwide criticism was also addressed at Thailand's censorship policy and the lack of freedom of expression on the Internet.

the House of Parliament and the Senate revealed that absolute freedom imperils national security. Similarly, the disparagement of the monarchy shall not be compromised at any cost. The 2007 Computer Crime Law is, as a result, the justified efforts of the government to regulate the Internet use (Pirongrong, 2013, pp. 103-107).

The structure of Thai Internet control is discussed in this section with the focus on security apparatus and legal mechanisms both inside and outside of political crises, particularly after the 2006 coup d'état. In over 20 years of commercial Internet in Thailand, numerous websites had been launched for services and terminated due to business failures and orders from state agencies due to illegal content. Pantip, however, remains a leading website in Thailand with many users. Moreover, it has sustained itself during Thailand's economic and political crises throughout its 18 years of service provision. Thais know Pantip as a free and open space for the exchange of information and ideas. At the same time, these activities are monitored by webmasters for the deletion of contents which are in conflict with the Internet Security Act and Computer Crime Law.

Although Pantip provides 33 '*Rooms*' for 33 different topics of discussion, the political discussion in the *Ratchadamnoen Room* seems to be more frequently mentioned in society than other '*Rooms*' during the past decade due to the country's political unrest. Mr. Wanchat, Pantip founder, has disclosed that many opinions were expressed online when Thailand's politics were heating up, especially in the *Ratchadamnoen Room* where people posted many more messages than they normally would under normal situations. Although the Constitution considers the expressions of

opinion to be a basic human freedom, and the expressions of different opinions are a key characteristic of democracy, Pantip has had to increase special levels of content control on the website. Content within the scope of *lèse majesté* has been deleted, and posters have had memberships cancelled immediately (Krungthep Turakij, 2008). Furthermore, as explained in Chapter 1 regarding outside influence on Pantip functions, the suspension of *Ratchadamnoen Room* in 2009 is a result of the exercise of self-censorship practice. The notification appeared on the screen in that time reads:

Due to the unrest in our country, and because Pantip has always observed with concern, we feel very discomfited from our perception that we are a part of what is causing disunity among Thais. In the past, we watched and hoped that our public forum should be a place that contributes to the roadmap for healing this disunity. However, we now feel that the situation has deteriorated and, therefore, we ask forgiveness from everyone for having to discontinue the services in the Ratchadamnoen Room until the situation has improved (Matichon, 2010).

Although no one knows the true cause of the aforementioned suspension, Panupong Wongrod, a board of IT reporters of the Thai Journalists' Association, has analysed that Pantip needed to protect itself from illegal actions as a content provider or webmaster allowing the website to contain slanderous content and accusations against others, which is a crime under Article 15 of the Computer-Related Crime Act (Matichon, *ibid.*). Nonetheless, after the *Ratchadamnoen Room* opened to provide services as usual in 2010, the perceived role of Pantip as a powerful space for political debate is inverse.

Moreover, as explained on Page 62 regarding the definition of “intermediaries” in Article 15 of Computer Crime Law, Pantip as a content provider will become a defendant if the conversation threads are found to have content or opinions that violate social order and national security. In an interview with *Prachachat Turakij*, Mr. Wanchat comments

that Pantip's status as a public space under Article 15 is a significant challenge in his work because he can become a criminal and be prosecuted at any time. Since the Computer Crime Law was declared in 2007, Pantip has been involved in five cases consisting of four criminal cases and a civil case. These crimes were not truly cybercrimes, but they all were "defamation crimes" in which Pantip was summoned by court order and became unavoidably involved in the court's judgment process. If, however, any complaints - which are posted in a thread involving injustice or unfair advantage - are found to be true with wide-ranging social benefits, Pantip is willing to fight the case in court. A part of the company's budget has been reserved to specifically cover the expenses on this issue (Prachachat Turakij, 2013). When the legal mechanisms of control on Pantip with the business control model on mainstream media are compared, these two types of control are found to reflect the axiom of media operations in Thailand. While every type of commercial media has to work any way it can in order to survive, mainstream media, including print and broadcast media that require significant funding in business operations for equipment, personnel and production, place the greatest importance on advertisement as their means of economic survival. For online media with lower operating costs like Pantip; however, the primary income is not as important as the requirement for strict compliance with the scope of the law and the regular policing of the site to ensure clean content to prevent suspensions or closure orders by the ICT Ministry.

2.4 THAI CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE DYNAMICS OF PARTICIPATION IN THAILAND

According to Thai scholars, such as Wilasinee (2004), civil society refers to the networks, groups, and communities that gather to avoid being manipulated by the state and that prevent internal competition for individual benefits. Civil society emerged due to the notion of an ideal society that focuses on the rights and responsibilities of people to find solutions for social problems, and also to support the government's policies. Civil society is therefore considered to be the outcome of a democratic society. In Thailand, this term has been acknowledged and has been used in the academic realm since the May 1992 popular protest in Bangkok against the government. In addition, its role was apparent during the drafting of the Constitution in 1996, and in the financial crisis of 1997, by way of advocating civic participation in the country's development plan. One of the achievements of this movement was the arrival of a Public Broadcasting Service and of community radio stations in Thailand (Wilasinee, *ibid.*, p. 8).

In the Thai context, the emergence of civil society illustrates the Thai political sphere from two significant aspects. The first aspect is the public awareness of dealing with public issues that are related to them, without any force from the public sectors and commercial activities. The second aspect is the creation of networks among local communities and national public administrations for the unity of social movement and cooperative development. However, Anuchat *et al.* (1999) observe that despite a high degree of public awareness of their roles,

a practical knowledge of this concept very often differs from one to another due to the values and the readiness of each group to apply this concept (p. 302). An interesting observation is that the definitions of civil society that are proposed by Western scholars are incompatible with those in the Thai circumstances. That is to say, Thai civil societies do not resist the authority of the government and the state but, rather, they co-operate with them. In addition, other organisations, such as private enterprises and the army have not yet engaged in Thai civil societies' activities as parts of their multilateral alliances (Anuchat *et al.*, *ibid.*).

With respect to the infrastructure for participation, many Thai scholars have agreed that “public space” is strongly needed in order to strengthen civil society. Thawilwadee (2009) highlights that, without the provision of public space, participants in civil society may demonstrate their opinions in improper arenas that are against the law. Such situations have occurred many times in Thailand and they have become conflicts instead of constructive participation (p. III). Anuchat *et al.* (1999) have clarified that public space includes any communication channels as well as any opportunities and mechanisms that allow free debates and joint activities. In the Thai context, informal fora, traditional cafés, local festivals, and folk sports events can be considered to be public spaces. The key principle is that such spaces not only enable equal expression among the participants, but also allow others with the same interests to share their ideas. Moreover, participation must be encouraged by the dynamics of awareness, decision making, and problem solving that concern their communities (p. 296).

The dynamic of civic participation in Thailand depends on political conditions and the influence of external factors, which are globalisation, the leadership of the current government, and the political culture of the people. However, the participation of the Thai people can be divided into two main types: formal and informal patterns. “Formal participation” relates to national elections and includes many political activities, such as debates, campaigns, and giving one’s vote. “Informal participation” is against laws and regulations, thus causing chaos, such as the overthrowing of the government, demonstrations, industrial action, and blocking roads. The objective of informal participation is to call on the government for policy amendment and economic improvement. Chaos can be more intense if it is intervened in by a third party, or the government applies harsh methods to handle such critical situations (Suchit, 2005, cited in Thawilwadee, 2009, pp. 30-32). Thawilwadee (*ibid.*, pp. 85-97) summarises the dynamics of the participation of Thai citizens in the past 60 years (1946 - 2006) as follows:

Formal participation

Between 1946 and 1976, despite the country having changed its regime to become a democracy, the chances for Thais to participate in political activities were low. Elections were conducted only as a consequence of the dissolution of parliament or of a coup d’état. The information was misleading and its distribution was poor. The public sector strongly focused on economic aspects so as to lead Thailand to becoming an industrial country. During these 30 years, there was a huge divide

between the government and the citizens. The roles of Thais in their co-operation with the government in relation to policy and decision making were not solid.

Between 1977 and 1996, the growth of the economy and of communication technology resulted in the spread of globalisation to Thailand. However, a lack of “communication channels” and “public spaces” restricted the participation of Thais in public policy formulation. Economic development that focused on industrial growth remained the administration’s theme. Agricultural growth also maintained its productivity, mainly for export. Once the financial crisis affected the country and became a critical issue in the Southeast Asian region, the administration was shifted to apply the concept of localism and sufficiency economy. Moreover, social participation in environmental conservation emerged. Academics and civil representatives successfully shared their views with the Congress on the effects of the *Namjon* Dam construction on the national reserved forest, and, the project was stopped in 1988.

Furthermore, academics, activists and NGOs had called for more transparency and verifiability in public administration. One of the most successful cases was the establishment of the People’s Council, which was comprised of representatives elected from all parts and by all classes of the country. Its key role was participation in the drafting of Thailand’s 1997 Constitution. However, despite several movements, many national mega projects, for instance, power stations and wastewater treatment plants, were undertaken without public hearings. Relevant factors included the government monopoly of radio and television broadcasting, which resulted in

a high degree of state intervention in media outlets. Public knowledge was therefore derived from the public sectors and content was likely to support the public-relations purposes, rather than civil participation.

Between 1997 and 2006, the 1997 Constitution of Thailand, popularly called “the People’s Constitution”, was enacted. There was major transition in political aspects, particularly in civil participation in formulating policies, sharing information to investigate and dismiss dishonest politicians. Additionally, this Constitution promoted empowerment to local government agencies. However, the gap between the aims of the Constitution and practicality could not be bridged in the short run, because government officials failed to adjust their attitudes so as to accept civil participation in their works. Many new laws were enacted without the involvement of citizens, whereas the existing laws had never been adapted to correspond to public opinion. Thawilwadee (*ibid.*) analyses the laws encouraging civil empowerment as being seemingly impossible, because the politicians do not want to be deprived of their benefits, if the public or independent organisations participate in the administrative process for the sake of transparency.

Although there had been an attempt to allocate the broadcasting frequency spectrum - which are merely owned by government agencies such as the Royal Thai Army - to Thai citizens from all social segments, such process was dilatory. Globalisation was one of the drivers that promoted the concept of peaceful civil participation, and this issue was broadly encouraged. Countries that apply harsh approaches and lack good governance will be condemned at the global level. There is also an organisation

conducting exploratory research to compare the level of citizen-involved democracy⁹ in many nations. During this period, Thai citizens became more aware of their rights and they joined civil society to propose the laws. However, no law was approved and enacted by the Legislative Assembly unless such a law complied with the government's policies. Some movements in civil society were accomplished, such as the enforcement of independent organisations and of the Administrative Court in restricting the privatisation of the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand. In relation to the election of members of the House of Representatives, the middle-class population was likely to select their representative by considering the qualifications and capabilities of the applicants and their party's policies, while upcountry people selected local representative who themselves contributed to local development. These "formal" participations are due to political reform and the 1997 Constitution of Thailand.

Informal Participation

Between 1946 and 1976, there were several coups d'état, protests, chaos, and revolutions. Despite the fact that these events came from the power of the citizen to promote democracy, they caused massive losses of lives, since the government perceived that citizens as being opponents, thus using lethal weapons in such events. The Massacre of 6th October 1976 was an attack on students from various Thai universities who demonstrated against the return to Thailand of the former military dictator,

⁹ The Asian Barometer Survey, for example, is an applied research programme that aims to gauge public opinion on various political issues across Asia. The regional survey network encompasses research teams from 13 East Asian states, including Thailand, and 5 South Asian countries. See www.asianbarometer.org for more information.

Field Marshall Thanom Kittikajorn. However, the watershed event in Thai history was the popular uprising of 14th October 1973, because it highlighted the influence of Thai university students on politics. Events that have occurred during this period demonstrated the people's intention to revolutionise the country's political system. The middle class became the key contributor, since they were dissatisfied with politicians who had exploited their authority to their own advantages. The university students also fought for the sake of justice to support the disabled social class. Moreover, politics allowed the participation of various groups of people, even though they were not keen on political ideology.

Between 1977 and 1996, the most important participation of the various civil society groups was the protest against the government's administration. Eventually, the Prime Minister, General Kriangsak Chamanan, announced his resignation in 1980. The next Prime Minister, General Prem Tinsulanonda, declared a harmony policy with which to maintain relationships with neighbouring countries and on order to minimise conflicts between the government and citizens. However, crisis again occurred in Thailand during the next administration. Popular protest in May 1992, arose from the co-operation of the middle class ¹⁰ in order to challenge the military government and to repudiate the Prime Minister who was not formally appointed through an election. The military crackdown resulted in 52 officially confirmed deaths and over a hundred disappearances and injuries.

¹⁰ A survey by The Social Science Research Association of Thailand shows that, middle class, about 500,000 individuals, made up the majority of the populations. 60% of them are employees of private firms or business owners, 15% are government officers, and 8% are students. Almost half of the surveyed samples have a high income range of 10,000-49,000 Baht (approximately 200-980 Pounds Sterling) per month, age 20-29 years. These figures result from the rapid growth of Thai economy during the 1980s, especially in the real estate and securities' industries (Anek, 1993, pp. 87-88).

From 1997 to 2006, the role of university students in participating in civil society that was focused on various issues in the country declined. Nevertheless, the roles of other sectors in relation to civil society became apparent in terms of the management of the natural resources and the environment ¹¹, land management ¹², anti-corruption ¹³, and the requests for resignation of the Prime Minister¹⁴. The likelihood of people's participation was rising, as regulations from the Prime Minister's Office promoting public hearing became effective in 2005. These regulations identify that prior to implementing public projects that affect the environment, hygiene, and the traditions of local areas, the related government organisations must inform people and obtain feedback from local residents. Moreover, related organisations must summarise all feedback, issues, and the possible damage and must communicate these through the information technology channels of The Office of the Permanent Secretary, The Prime Minister's Office. Theoretically, the content of such regulations promote civil rights but, practically, government organisations fail to comply with them. On the contrary, civil society or individuals are the parties that request that government organisations follow those regulations, or they will pursue legal action.

¹¹ Cases include the rejection of a combined charcoal heat power plant at Prachuabkirikhan, the refusal of a landfill site in Samutprakan that would cause severe pollution in terms of bad smells and water conditions, the *Nong Harn* River Development Project in Sakonnakorn that was included in the Province's development plan.

¹² The destruction of the *Huaylaha Dam* in Ubolratchathani by Mrs. Hai Khanjanta and her family because this dam caused flooding in her rice fields.

¹³ Anti-corruption people's network that includes civil societies from various sectors who share information and formulate strategies to inspect the corruption of politicians.

¹⁴ The establishment of a People's Alliance for Democracy by the middle class to request the resignation of the Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, as a result of his conflicts of interest in administration.

Kanungnit (2002) points out that civil participation in Thailand is not successful as a result of six factors, which are as follows:

- (1) People lack the confidence, thinking that they might not have sufficient knowledge to make decisions.
- (2) The laws that promote the civil participation are unclear, so most people are not aware of their legitimacy in participation.
- (3) There is a lack of supportive methods, including knowledge management and sharing, the techniques of their execution, and attitudes among government officers and the citizens may not be in agreement.
- (4) Thais believe in the traditional political culture, that government officers have a higher authority than the citizens and are likely to apply harsh methods to solve problems. Thai citizens tend to believe that the country's administration is not the responsibility of all, but only of the government organisations.
- (5) The government is not ready to support civil participation, as the organisation prefers top-down or hierarchical management that is based on a chain of command. Moreover, financial support for political activities is derived from the public sectors, so government officers are likely to be more responsive to public organisations.
- (6) There is a lack of indicators and standards with which to measure the level of civil participation and the contributions of the public sector and, therefore, the officials do not have standards on which they rely and they are not able to improve their working processes.

In conclusion, this chapter begins with a brief history of Thailand, followed by the historical contextualisation of the research on five issues; these include Thai news media, Thai Internet, the socio-political use of the Internet by Thais, the Thai middle class, and Thai civil society with its dynamics of participation. It is clear that Thai journalistic works, both in print and broadcast media, have been attacked by the business model, meaning that economic survival is likely to be put above the societal responsibility for a free press. Additionally, Thai news organisations have occasionally suffered from state intervention in news circulation when the country has undergone political unrest. Today, the Internet has become an important interface for everyday social intercourse among Thais. In a peaceful situation, topics of discussion that have been censored or restricted in the Thai traditional media are freely circulated in cyberspace. However, during times of turmoil, online political content is closely monitored and numerous websites are blocked owing to the *lèse-majesté* comments that appear on them.

With regard to the socio-political use of the Internet in Thailand, such use among adolescents is low and that of mature people depends on certain circumstances, such as time, finance, and cultural and technical ability. Remarkably, “public spaces”, for instance, informal fora, traditional cafés, local festivals, and so on, are the vital infrastructure for participation. Public spaces are not only strongly needed in order to promote non-violent participation, but also to strengthen Thai civil society. Despite having elusive terminologies and being different from what has already been explicated by Western thinkers, both Thai civil societies and the Thai middle-class populations are obviously the main actors in social movements in the country.

The next chapter will present three theoretical dimensions of this research, which are: (1) Thai power through the concept of authoritarianism, (2) the concepts of the Internet forum as a public space, and (3) the concept of participatory journalism. Moreover, issues that are related to these concepts, for instance, the role of communication technology, an online community, and previous studies on Internet fora will be discussed.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the key themes at the foundation of this research is the representation of the Web that see it as a space containing a huge number of databases and that generates a vast flow of information. Sir Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web, points out that at the very beginning of his design, no one could imagine the functional capacity of the Web to disseminate documents, videos and sounds in an interactive dialogue. However, when it had later gained popularity, the World Wide Web became a vector of networks (Berners-Lee and Fischetti, 1999, p. 53). Youngs (2009) remarks that participation on the Internet is fundamental to the legitimacy of democratic systems (p. 128). The world is becoming interwoven; social relations are extended across distance; and humankind is increasingly mediated by this new form of information technologies (p. 136).

A large and growing body of literature has investigated the flow of public discussion and the exchange of views on the Internet. The concepts of civic empowerment, public space and participatory journalism have been found to be immensely important in the study of audience-as-content-creator news websites, such as *OhmyNews* from South Korea (e.g., Min, 2005; Eun-Gyoo and Hamilton, 2006; Han, 2007) and weblogs, which have been carried out in a western environment. However, no single study exists which adequately covers these concepts in relation to the Internet forum. Moreover, the generalisability of published research on public space and participatory journalism is still unclear in regard to the Internet forum, which is what this present research attempts to unveil.

The main contexts investigated in this study, which are addressed in this chapter are: (a) authoritarianism, (b) Internet fora, and (c) participatory journalism. The first section will examine Thai power through the concept of authoritarianism and, then, new social movements led by civil society through communication technology, namely, the Internet and new media. The following section will explore the definition and function of the Internet forum globally, as well as offering a brief summary of previous research on Pantip during the website's eighteen years. The last section will present the definition and function of participatory journalism, and its benefits for mainstream news media will be discussed.

3.1 AUTHORITARIANISM AND THE MEDIA

Thai power

In order to fully understand Thai politics, Thak Chaloemtiarana (2007) suggests that we have to seriously consider its past meanings and forms (p. 235), as well as its traditional political values, which are militaristic, paternalistic, and authoritarian (p. 10). The interplay of royal, military, and bureaucratic power relations has also shaped Thai political behaviour and has become one of the main characteristics of modern Thai politics (p. 1). Moreover, the contemporary forms of Thai power are beyond the bounds of the Western concept, as Morris (1997 and 2000, cited in Jackson, 2004a, p. 207) observed. Jackson (*ibid.*) provides in-depth analysis of this view and

calls it “the Thai regime of images ¹⁵”, which is the power that determines what can and cannot be articulated as public knowledge (p. 181). This concept was used as part of the strategic responses to the encroachment of the imperialist powers in the nineteenth century, and as a state apparatus against the Thai population in the twentieth century. Today, it remains in operation as “a highly effective means of silencing domestic political critics” (Jackson, 2004b, p. 247).

With respect to the notion of ‘authoritarianism’, this term is considered to be difficult to define. Many terms, for instance, autocracy, oligarchy, dictatorship and tyranny, are related to authoritarianism, and are often used interchangeably and indiscriminately, according to O’Neil (2013, p. 164). However, the scholars in the field identify such regimes as those which contrast with democracy. Jackson and Jackson (1993) describes it thus: “the authoritarian state sets itself apart in that it uses a high degree of coercion to obtain obedience and does not allow free, competitive elections to determine the degree of support for the government” (p. 72). Bealey (1999) defines the authoritarian as: “any form of organization and attitude which claims to have the right to impose its values and decisions on recipients who do not have the right or means of responding or reacting freely” (p. 21). From these thoughts, it can be concluded that authoritarian states deny the right and freedom of ordinary citizens in terms of participation and competition.

¹⁵ The concept is defined as “an internally differentiated form of power that exerts systematically different types of policing and control over actions and discourse in the private and public spheres, respectively. Under this regime, actions performed and statements uttered in the public domain are more stringently monitored than identical actions and utterances restricted to domains that may be no less visible but which are culturally labeled as private. When statements or representations do not conform with idealized forms, and are perceived as disrupting “the image of smooth calm,” which is defined as a traditional cultural pattern under the appearances of ideal cultural order, then both formal (legal) and informal (cultural) modes of power may be mobilized to expel the unwanted representations from the public domain.” (Jackson, 2004a, p. 181).

One question that needs to be asked, however, is whether an authoritarian state is politically stable. Haynes (2005) analyzes the main achievement of non-democratic regimes as developing forms of political stability through the systems of ruling and controlling (p. 56) and their rulers primarily measure economic success, rather than democratic accountability. Power, instead of being in the hands of public, is in those of a powerful individual or small élite group (p. 57). Institutions, such as media, which “provide a reservoir of images and voices, heroes and villains, saying and slogans, facts and ideas that we draw on in making sense of politics” (Jones, 2005, p. 17) are carefully controlled or censored by the leaders including military, bureaucracy and religious masters (Jackson and Jackson, 1993, p. 72). Hague and Harrop (2010) clearly draw attention to media censorship by illustrating that such leaders “rest content with ensuring favourable media coverage of their own achievement; their opponents are criticized or ignored” (p. 102).

Bearing in mind the previous point, Hague and Harrop (2010) observe that in the second half of the twentieth century, military government became an important form of authoritarian rule in Africa, Latin America and parts of Asia (p. 113). This observation, to some extent, has connections to Thailand. Located in Southeast Asia, The history of Siam, the former name of Thailand, has been dated from the thirteenth century by the evidence of written language use (Baker and Pasuk, 2009, p. 4). The country has been governed by Kings throughout the three eras of the *Sukhothai* (13th – 15th century), the *Ayutthaya* (15th – 18th century), and the *Rattanakosin* kingdom (18th century – present). The democratic revolution took place in 1932 and was led by a group of military and westernized bureaucrats, who formed Thailand’s

first political party. The country changed from being an absolute monarchy and became a constitutional monarchy with a prime minister as the head of the government, and with a king as the head of state. Ever since, Thai politics have been engulfed in the dynamics of the military. Army generals and their bureaucratic and commercial allies became the new élite (Morell and Chai-anan, 1981, p. 4). “It had high prestige as a social institution...[i]t exemplified some of the strongest and most enduring values in Thai society” (Wyatt, 2003, p. 232).

The next democratic revolution occurred in 1973, and in 1992, an end to the ruling military dictatorship was demanded. However, the coup d'états in 2006 and 2014, led by the Royal Thai Army, brought about a country under a caretaker government that was set up by the military. These two coups are closely related to what Jackson and Jackson (1993) call “facade democracies”, where elections and free political parties exist, but the military is the most powerful institution (p. 78). In addition, a Thai media studies scholar and a Chairperson of the Campaign for Popular Media Reform, Ubonrat (2013), considers Thai politics to be “Thai-style democracy”, which is a homegrown hybrid of half-hearted electoral democracy mixed with the military, élite and bureaucratic over-dominant power in the parliament and government. This historically goes far back as 1947-1951 when monarchists instituted the *lèse-majesté* concept in the 1949 constitution that, ‘no one could charge or bring any action against the king’. Sarit Thanarat’s military government, then, promoted the stature of the monarchy as a means to legitimise his power gained from the coup in 1957. Thus, the coup makers are regarded as a savior of Thai-style democracy or, in other words, Democracy with the King as Head of State. The administration of Prime Minister

General Prem Tinsulanond in the 1980s has also been recognized as the working model of Thai-style democracy. Furthermore, according to researcher's personal analysis, the account of coup d'état in 2006 and the recent one in 2014, as well as the military governments after these two coups were equally the representation of Thai style-democracy in contemporary Thailand. Hewison (2009, cited in Ubonrat, *ibid.*) concluded in his lecture on Thai-style democracy that the military should not be seen as power seekers but "they should be perceived in terms of protector of Thai-style democracy" (<http://www.mediainsideout.net/research/2013/07/137>. Accessed: 30 January 2014 and 5 March 2016). The *lèse-majesté* concept and bureaucratic power under this Thai-style democracy are, as a result, the ground structure that shapes the mechanism and convention of the control of mass media and, also, the online content after the proliferation of the Internet penetration in the country.

Some studies have attempted to explain the domestic factors of Thailand's democratisation. The 1973 uprising, which demonstrated the influence of university students as a political force, is criticised by Slater (2010) as it "did not signal the eternal triumph of Thai democracy, but it did sound the death knell for Thai authoritarian Leviathans" (p. 252). The Thai political scientist, Anek (1996), makes a valid point when he argues that: "the educated middle classes accepted military guardianship only as a means to stop democratic vices but not as an alternative government" (p. 219). However, Englehart (2003) is very critical about the middle-class population in relation to the Thai democratisation process. In his close examination of the democracy protest in 1992, Englehart argues that the middle class in Thailand is notoriously difficult to define (p. 255), and their role in supporting the protest is unclear (p. 253).

Although modernisation leads the country's economic growth, producing a wealthy and well-educated Thai urban middle class, Englehart (*ibid.*) remarks that economic globalization provides a clearer landscape for Thai democratisation (p. 254).

The 2006 coup d'état took place after over a month of open-air rallies and turmoil led by yellow-shirt protestors against the corrupt prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra. One of the investigations of this military coup was carried out by McCargo (2009), who claims that the idea behind the protest demonstrated a "new politics" that would bar corrupt and disloyal politicians from securing or monopolizing power" (p. 18). What is more, his work contests with Englehart's idea (2003), due to the fact that the group of protestors was a combination of Bangkok's Sino-Thai population, young activists, NGO leaders, monarchists, retired civil servants and the supporters of the opposition party, which are obviously the urban middle class. Similarly, the protagonists in the 2013 anti-government demonstrators are a diverse group that includes many affluent and middle-class Bangkok residents (Fuller, 2013; BBC News Asia, 2014). However, again, this uproar resulted in a military coup and the establishment of a junta to govern the nation in May 2014. Ockey's study (2009) is useful to this research because two different points of view of Thai military are provided. On the one hand, it interferes in politics by compelling the government to quit. On the other hand, it sometimes stays out of politics and distinguishes itself when it is neglected by government (*ibid.*, p. 330).

The concept of authoritarianism, with a concentration on Thai political events, has brought into discussion the need to seek the major factors of Thai democratic development. Indeed, this research does not investigate the process of political democratisation, but the illustrations of the country's democracy, which apparently reveal the essential determinants of Thai socio-political change. These are: modernisation, economic globalization, a middle class and a technically educated population. The hypothesis, which is put forward to give insight into the research, is that these determinants are the impulses for each other. Pantip is a "medium" which is a part of the modernisation process, which O'Neil (1998, p. 3) discusses more widely. However, the users and their purposes in using the website are poorly stated, and it is this on which the research will shed light and which it will attempt to explain in more depth.

When considering modernisation, O'Neil (*ibid.*) criticises it as a process of emulating Western patterns in the construction of democracy. Although it is a Eurocentric notion which is poorly linked to their environment, and which is eventually discredited, modernisation theory is an indicator of progress and developing nations are expected to follow that path, and, ultimately, to enjoy a modern economic and political system (p. 4). This concept is included in the discussion here since it helps to understand that the structure of Thai society has been transformed and developed owing to the reinforcement of modernisation. Twenty years ago, Hewison (1993) acknowledged that Thailand is now more diverse and complex than she was, with the economy emerging as a new logic of social and political forces to produce new ways of thinking about Thai life (p. 182). Nearly ten years later,

Case (2002) pointed out that it was not business but mass attitudes and social forces that raised the quality of Thai democracy (p. 199). Moreover, Thai civil society is more remarkable than that in any other of the countries in Southeast Asia (p. 197). The following literature review will consequently amplify the concept of civil society.

Civil society, the new middle class and new social movements

According to Haynes (2005), civil society (CS) is one of the main domestic factors in democratisation theory and it refers to key defenders, including labour unions, social movements, professional associations, student groups, religious bodies, and the media who oppose the dominance of state (p. 204). O'Neil (2013) defines it more simply by pointing out that CS can refer to any organization, groups of collectors, enthusiasts, or even sport teams, who form networks across economic, social, or political divides and who articulate their preferences (p. 170). As comparative political scientists, both agree that CS is important in democratic life and action. In particular, a 'strong' one is considered to be crucial for democratic consolidation, because it can help to "keep an eye on the state and what it does with its power" (Haynes, *ibid.*, p. 203).

However, one criticism of much of the literature on CS is that there is inconsistency between the term and the contradictory interests. Mamdani (1996) combines the historical construction of the CS concept from three philosophers. For Hegel, CS comprises of two related moments, which are: the first is the explosive in the arena of the market,

and the second is the integration of public opinion. For Marx, the character of CS is defined as the bourgeoisie, which is the agency that is embedded in the market. For Gramsci, the realm of CS is not the market, but public opinion and culture (Mamdani, *ibid.*, pp. 14-15). White (1996) is another scholar who heavily criticises the notion of the term. In his historical analysis of CS around its meaning and use during the 1960s-1990s, he demonstrates the ambiguous characteristics of CS in different language discourses. For example “it has been dusted off and deodorized to suit a variety of ideological, intellectual and practical needs”, “they are commonly used in vague, simplistic or biased ways”, “the term means different things to different people and often degenerates into a vapid political slogan” (p. 178), and “[i]t is often used loosely” (p. 179).

Also, the inconsistency in meanings and the use of this term can be found in many studies worldwide. While Chatterjee (2002) finds it useful for her exploration of post-colonial civil and political society in India to maintain the sense of CS in regard to its characteristic institutions of modern associational life that have originated in Western societies (p. 172). Zubaida (2002) entirely disagrees with this implication. In analysis of community and democracy in the Middle East, Zubaida claims that the concept of CS, which was historically developed in Western political experience, is problematic for the Muslim world. Moreover, it has proved to be ambiguous owing to its ideological usages (p. 235). In colonial African states, likewise, CS is reportedly debatable. Mamdani (1996) argues that free association and free publicity were the rights of citizens under direct rule, whereas the subjects were customarily organised by tribal authority under indirect rule. The application of CS in a colony is doubtful, because

political representation was racialised, but the Native Authority was tribalised (p. 19). For modern republics in Latin America, CS can only be understood as the outcome of a very distinctive experience, as Leiva and Pagden (2002) state: “No understanding...is possible without a perception of the role republicanism has had to play as the moral basis for all forms of political life” (p. 179).

The notoriously elusive term, CS, with its complexity in the social universe, results from the three selective approaches of the intellectual paradigms; these are the modern form of association, principles of liberal democracy, and the growth of capitalism in which these approaches associate with the differentiation of the citizenry and the connotations of CS itself (White, 1996, p. 181). Rather than defining it, White (*ibid.*) suggests the delivery of the terms with this breadth: “*an intermediate associational realm between state and family populated by organizations which are separate from the state, enjoy autonomy in relation to the state and are formed voluntarily by members of society to protect or advance their interests or values*” (italics in the original, p. 182). Instead of searching for some ideal type, the distinction between different types or sectors of CS should also be considered, because different types are expected to have different orientations. This approach not only reveals the realities of actually existent CS, but it also provides a more complete picture of the social forces that impede and further democratisation (White, *ibid.*).

It is clear from the literatures above that civil society varies widely in its sectors, situations and set of norms. However, its role is that it shifts the balance of power from the state to citizens and society (Blair, 1997; Burchell, 1991; White, 1996). In Thailand,

the definition of CS derives from the concept that has been developed by Western philosophers. However, Anek (1999) stresses three characteristics of the desired CS, which are: (1) the formation of a group of ‘strangers’, who are not from among family members, friends, or relatives; (2) the members should voluntarily participate in the group with the freedom to access it and to quit; and (3) the members should work together equally, without any concern for seniority (p. 39). In order to support CS, the Thai media can play the important role of promoting CS and civic participation, as well as in maintaining the relationships between media organisation, CS, and the public in general (Chavarong, 1999, p. 179).

Pantip is one of the biggest online platforms where Thai citizens can share their ideas and express their critical thoughts, which are liable to further social interests by educating and influencing other members of society. As a result of these roles, Pantip users, or so-called Pantip members, are inherently an “online” civil society, without dealing with trade unions and parties on its own, in the democratising of Thai contemporary life. A contribution of this research is that it will present the way Pantip users manipulate their power in this Internet forum. Moreover, it aims to widen on the role of the “new” middle class, which Calhoun (1993) defines as having: “high levels of education and technical skill combined with employee status rather than ownership of capital” (p. 401). The structure of the entire Thai middle class has already been presented in Chapter Two and their performance in the revolution was discussed in that chapter. Although some scholars, namely Englehart (2003), have questioned the role of the middle class in supporting democracy, it is obvious from Thai political history that university students, professionals and workers in the private sectors,

were the actors in the movement. Suchit (2001) suggests that the Thai urban middle class is more concerned with major national issues than those citizens who are part of the lower classes. Although there is not necessarily a strong link between the middle class as a whole, this stratum is an important feature of social forces and the development of Thai civil society (p. 78).

Bearing in mind the previous points, “social movement” is a relevant term that deserves special attention. By providing “trenchant critiques of the conventional paradigm of development” and articulating “newer and more egalitarian visions of the social order”, according to the examples given by Jayal (2001), social movements have been an important component of civil society since the mid-1980s (p. 139). However, in the 1990s: “the social construction of meaning has become a central part of social movement theory” (Klandermans, 1997, p. 204). Khagram *et al.* (2002) attempt to clarify what this means by explaining:

Movements help to create and recreate meaning through “framing” or “the strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action.” ... [F]rames are not ideas, but ways of packaging and presenting ideas. Movements then use these frames to attempt the “mobilization of consensus,” that is, persuasive communication aimed at convincing others to take their side (p. 12).

McAdam *et al.* (1996) observe that the framing process will happen among “homogenous people who are in intense regular contact with each other” (p. 9). Khagram *et al.* (2002) argue that these people refer to anyone and in any society, although it tends to be difficult to find the conditions that contribute to the emergence and

effectiveness of social movement (p. 13). To this end, the concept of the social movement is being put forward in this present research. If the regular connection of people in any given community constructs the meaning of that society, as theories suggest, then Pantip users who present their ideas, as well as commentaries on the particular country's current affairs, are indeed the mobilizers of consensus. This condition, which is emerging on a Thai Internet forum, will probably be a new form of social movement in contemporary Thai society, in which the findings of this research will add to the current state of knowledge.

However, the relationship between social movements and democratisation has been critiqued previously by Mouffe (1988), who prefers to use “democratic struggles” rather than “social movements”. She remarks that democracy “is our most subversive idea because it interrupts all existing discourses and practices of subordination,” and this causes an inequality and a widening of social conflicts, because people “have been constructed as subjects in a democratic tradition that puts those values at the centre of social life” (p. 96). Mouffe (*ibid.*) proceeds with a delineation that shows that, today, the proliferation of the democratic revolution is no longer limited only to the political and economic arenas, but they are also present in other subordinations of social relations; for example, women, homosexuals, and various regional and ethnic minorities, for which rights and self-determination are also being defined and demanded (p. 100).

In order to articulate all of the democratic struggles, Mouffe (*ibid.*) proposes the idea of the “pluralism of subjects”, by acknowledging the existence of others and respecting their political character, specificity and autonomy (p. 100). This is what is

called a new hegemonic formation for a more democratic society, which also depends on the ability of the existing forces (p. 99). Beyond this scheme, however, Mouffe (*ibid.*) also highlights the background to the struggles. One of the aspects of the problem results from mass culture that is imposed by the media, which broaden the uniformity of the cultural pattern and of a homogenized way of life. The resistances or new social movements, therefore, have arisen from subordinate groups that reaffirm their differences and identities (p. 93).

Indeed, as already mentioned in Chapter One, Pantip provides 33 rooms for 33 different topics of discussion. These extensive varieties of fora not only allow the public voices to be heard, but also guarantee the availability of space for the minorities in Thai society. The concepts of the “pluralism of subjects” and of “hegemonic formation” that are proposed by Mouffe (*ibid.*) are very useful to this research since they demonstrate the functions of Pantip in empowering ordinary Thai citizens. The expectations of this study are that it will discover how users use this website, what their true purpose is in using it, and how the outcomes of that usage affects the journalistic practices of national news agencies. The concept of the Internet forum will be discussed in its own section, but now the idea of communication technology and the Internet as tools for democratisation will be discussed as follows.

Communication technology and the Internet: tools for democratisation

There is, indeed, a very large volume of publications dealing with the definition of democracy and its functions as a guiding ideal and as a sustainable practice (for example, see Dahl, 1998, for the systematic explanations on an ideal and actual democracy; and see Hendriks, 2010, for the excellent arguments on the variations of a democracy theme). Although most democratisation scholars define democracy in terms of electoral competition and effective constitutional respect for basic civil liberties and human rights according to Dryzek (2013, p. 3), Dalton *et al.* (2008) bring into focus that democracy requires more than an understanding of the term and one should be cautious about reading too much into its public definition, because most citizens of most developing nations are capable of imputing meaning to democracy in their own words. Interestingly, the popular appeal of democracy lies not in its procedures for elections and governance, but, rather in the freedom and liberty that democracy provides (p. 11).

This study places the emphasis on the aspect of democratisation in relation to a free expression of opinions and the available efficient means that support such expression. Pantip is a powerful tool for Thai democratisation, even though it is true that some topics are prohibited for the debate such as those that violate members of the Royal Family and the dignity of a monarch. However, Thai citizens enjoy their freedom of expression by accessing Pantip for a wide variety of discussion, particularly for the topics that are useful for making a decision and for enhancing the quality of their lives. A social connection together with the self-expression values in terms of the participatory orientations towards society and politics in Pantip not only

help to establish and sustain democratic environment in Thailand, but also play an important role in the process of democratisation, as far as the critical thought of Welzel and Inglehart (2008, p. 20) is concerned. In addition, the essence of democracy is that it empowers ordinary citizens. Welzel and Inglehart (*ibid.*) argue human empowerment, meaning that the resources and values that enable ordinary citizens effectively give a pressure to the elites, is the vital driving force behind democratisation and the development of effective democracy (p. 16). Similarly to the conceptual review which has been done by Parry and Moran (1994), the promotion of human agency is one of the major justifications for democracy (p. 277), and a democratic life involves forum in which interests can be articulated, challenged, and reconciled through the dialogue (p. 281). Dryzek (2013) considers a “talk-centric” aspect of democracy. His analysis highlights the relationship between the deliberative capacity building and democratisation, and it recognises that deliberation can be open to a variety of forms of communication (p. 4). Five logical requirements; including public space, empowered space, transmission, accountability, and decisiveness, constitute a starting point for the evaluation of all real-world deliberative system which also provide the basis for a comprehensive approach to the study of democratisation (p. 10).

Notwithstanding, the link between democratisation and mass communication has been questioned by some scholars, such as O’Neil (1998). He raises the point that the significant watchdog roles of the media have been found to be weakening. Content in reportage tends to be less diverse, more centralized, more monopolized and too close to state power, owing to the affiliation of media with the political élites (p. 2).

However, the role of the media can be part either of the problems or of the solutions, according to Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi (1994). In terms of the relationships between media and democratisation, they write:

Media can be used by states to establish their definitions of the political, their version of history; they are part of the ideological state apparatus, the forces of repression. At the same time, media can be the tools of popular mobilization, they can maintain alternative histories and promote oppositional culture - in short, they constitute the resources and forms of expression of popular movements (p. 20).

The key aspect of this argument is that the freedom of communication through the media is a crucial part of democratisation. Being skeptical on the connection, however, O'Neil (1998) argues that the democratic rule is established upon the freedom of communication through media (p. 2). Voltmer (2006) agrees with this point and adds that the media are normally assigned to providing the audiences with the opportunity to express their alternative views. "Regardless of the validity of their truth claims", writes Voltmer (*ibid.*, p. 3), the "market place of ideas" (O'Neil, 1998, p. 2; Voltmer, 2006, p. 3) overcomes the domination and agendas of élites. This perspective, which Sreberny-Mohammadi (1998) describes as public participation and cultural pluralism, circumscribes the democratisation that media play a very important role in encouraging (p. 195). Moreover, with respect to the power of the media, Mancini and Swanson (1996) indicate that "mass media emerge in modern polyarchies as an autonomous power center in reciprocal competition with other power centers", such as political parties (p. 11).

We turn now to the role of communication technology via a world-wide system of networked computers, or the Internet, which is a “technology of freedom” (Pool, 1983; Sussman, 1989) and a “digital environment” (Wheeler, 1998) that advocates new forms of participation (p. 218) and creates harmonization, decentralization and empowerment (p. 220). The Internet provides modern forms of communication, which is “mass self-communication” (Castells, 2009, p. 63) because it is “self-generated in content, self-directed in emission, and self-selected in reception by many who communicate with many” (*ibid.*, p. 70). Although the Internet and this digital communication are not mass media in the traditional way these are recognised, Street (2011) evaluates this new media as being as powerful as the press, radio and television, and they are sometimes more powerful than parties and parliaments (p. 284). However, the Internet goes beyond its predecessors as far as its characteristics are concerned. It not only has non-hierarchical architecture that equips the users with interactivity, but the Internet also has a resilient ability against any form of control which was exercised on the old media (Robles, 2001; Banerjee, 2003, p. 4).

It could be argued that the Internet constitutes a greater power for ordinary people. In the case of the “unregulated cyberspace of the Internet” (Wheeler, 1998, p. 218), alternative ideas are allowed access to the mainstream and the flow of information distribution is reformed (p. 224). As a result, for Wheeler (*ibid.*), the Internet not only increases “the control the consumers have over what messages are received”, but also increases “the control the senders have over specific audiences who receive the messages” (p. 219). For Khiabany and Sreberny (2009) the Internet originates “a vibrant politico-cultural space” and “cultural consumption” (p. 126). People depend on

the Internet for information and debate when traditional media remain a state monopoly or become forbidden (*ibid.*). This is the reason why the popularity of the Internet among many groups continues unabated (Banerjee, 2003, p. 4).

Numerous worldwide studies have attempted to explain the correlation between the Internet and democratisation (for example, Hill and Hughes, 1999; Sen, 2003; Friedman, 2005; Rosen, 2010; Kwak, 2011; Abbott, 2012; Nisbet *et al.*, 2012) in which the results prove that the Internet - or the other terms used by these authors - online media, new communication technology and newest electronic media, provides the tools for democratisation. However, the existing accounts fail to show the impact of the Internet and also the power of Internet users to introduce democratic reforms to the media themselves, and by using the Internet to neutralize the hegemony of mainstream media. A major contribution of this research is to unveil this capacity of the Internet in Thailand. By focusing on an Internet forum, the examination involves public debate in Pantip, where it is one of the country's major online agorae for discussion on various issues including news, which is "a vital part of any democratic project" (Lewis, 2006, p. 308). The outcome will not simply enhance knowledge in the field of Internet studies, but it will illustrate how Thai Internet forum entails social movement and activates socio-political change.

Briefly, the literatures suggest that freedom in communication is essential. The media, where they are referred to as the market place for ideas allowing people to express and exchange opinions, have a powerful ability to shape the perception of society, on the one hand, and to generate new centres of power, on the other.

According to Kalathil and Boas (2003), research on the Internet has today been conducted around its role in supporting democracy (p. 4). Yet, few serious studies have tested the impact of this medium on governments, corporations and societies around the world (p. ix). This research pays much attention to the impact of the Internet forum on mainstream journalism. Additionally, it investigates the possibility of this online media as an efficient agonistic public space. The concept of public space, together with that of the Internet forum, will be exhaustively presented in the next section. It begins by explaining the definition and usage of the Internet forum. Then its characteristics and functions are discussed. The previous research on these issues will be integrated where it is relevant.

3.2 INTERNET FORUM

Definition and usage

From the English dictionaries of the main publishers in the United Kingdom (Advanced Learners, 2003; Encarta, 2001; Longman, 2003; the Chambers, 2010) the word ‘forum’ can be classified on the basis of its meaning into both ‘*action*’ and ‘*place*’. The former refers to meeting to discuss matters of general interest, or topics of public concern, especially important public issues. The latter represents “a medium”, such as a magazine, newspaper, TV programme, where people have a chance for discussion. Only the Chambers dictionary (*ibid.*) explains a forum as “a location on the World Wide Web” where people may exchange views and information (p. 601). Moreover, some publishers provide alternative terms, including “a group of computer users” who are interested in a particular subject on the Internet (Longman, *ibid.*, p. 635),

“Internet discussion group” (Encarta, *ibid.*, p. 564), “Internet message board” (Oxford, 2010, online). Bulletin Board System, or BBS, is also another term that is associated with forum. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as: “an Internet site where users can post comments about a particular issue or topic and reply to other users’ postings” (Oxford, *ibid.*) but now this term is generally obsolete (the Chambers, *ibid.*, p. 202).

This research pays particular attention to the sense of ‘place’ of a forum. By adding the word ‘Internet’ in front of the definition, it becomes clearer in terms of referring to such a virtual place on the World Wide Web, where people literally meet and chat by posting and replying to messages. Pantip is indeed an Internet forum and recognition of this website as an online meeting place for Thais is comprehensive among its users. However, Pantip proclaims itself to be ‘community’. Before the major refurbishment of the Web page and its architecture on 1st January 2013, this word appeared in Thai on the frontend of the website. It is necessary here to clarify this concept and also to examine the dynamics of the community in Thai Internet forum.

The Internet forum as an online community

The concept of community is difficult to define, and is particularly elusive, problematic and outdated, according to many scholars in Internet studies (for example, Slevin, 2000; Castells, 2001; Cantoni and Tardini, 2006; Baym, 2010). For Thai intellectuals, such as Bunthian, 1988; Chatthip, 1997; Praves, 1998; and Bamrung, 2006, the interpretation of community is associated with an understanding of local culture, where assistance and dependence on each other are part of the distinctive nature of the Thai community.

For Western intellectuals, the generalisability of much of the published research on community is liable to depend on the German sociological theorist, Ferdinand von Tönnies¹⁶. However, Fuchs (2008) draws attention to the notion of social relationship that is proposed by Tönnies, with that of another well-known German sociologist, Max Weber. He compares them:

For both Tönnies and Weber, community has to do with a feeling of togetherness and traditions. Whereas Tönnies makes a sharp distinction between community as premodern and society as modern, Weber doesn't see such a strict dichotomy. Both wanted to strengthen community, Tönnies by socialist corporatives, Weber by charismatic leadership (p. 304).

Fuchs (*ibid.*) goes on to Tönnies' conception by exemplifying the essences of community; including folkways, family, village, agriculture, morality, organic, togetherness, inherited status, and the harmonious consensus of wills. Whatever they are, however, community is an old notion. Chayko (2008) stresses "sociologists have not been able to agree on how, or whether, definitions of community should be updated" (p. 6).

Several attempts have been made to explain the concept of community in modern social life. Slevin (2000), for instance, argues that the new sense of community starts with the idea of nation, which is "generally regarded as the strongest group identification in the modern period and thus perhaps the most 'real' community of this era" (Poster, 1995, p. 34; cited in Slevin, *ibid.*, p. 93). However, the nature of nationalism in the modern world is described as "imagined communities." Anderson (2006) comments that the nation "is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation

¹⁶ See Ferdinand von Tönnies. (1887). *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, in Charles P. Loomis. (1955). *Community and Association*. (trans.) London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (p. 6). Viewed from this end of social interpretation, Anderson’s imagined community (1) “is related to perception rather than grounded in location” (Green, 2010, p. 141); (2) it describes a coherent group of people representing a new form of solidarity as a result of media proliferation such as the Internet (Ritzer, 2012, p. 998); and (3) it can be regarded as symbolic or virtual community (Cantoni and Tardini, 2006, p. 158).

According to Rheingold (2000), virtual communities (VCs) emerge when “enough people” establish a personal relationship on the Internet and continue public discussion for a “long enough” period of time with “sufficient human feeling” (p. xx). Although an Internet forum is an example of this relationship (Dictionary of Media Studies, 2006, p. 250), Fernback (1999) criticizes that only the forum that is accompanied by “personal investment, intimacy, and commitment” can be regarded as VC; otherwise it is “nothing more than a means of communication among people with common interest” (p. 216). Some scholars (such as Miller and Slater, 2000, cited in Green, 2010) also dispute that there is nothing virtual about the Internet. Their ethnographic research on the use of the Internet in the West Indies implies that the Internet is part of real life. The communities found on the computer screen are similarly authentic, face-to-face communities (Green, *ibid.*, p. 141). From the argument above, in general, the concept of VC is controversial. However, it can be said that the expression of feeling is important in defining VC, as far as the viewpoints of Fernback (1999) and Rheingold (2000) are concerned. Moreover, a sense of belonging to the group, as well as shared norms,

values and an interest in a shared communication environment, are the main features which VCs require (Cantoni and Tardini, 2006, p. 161).

The study on how Internet users deliver offline benefit to their online members, as well as the way online communities function and organise themselves are the main attention the current researchers are paying to (Green, 2010, p. 141). Castells (2001) remarks on the flexibility and power of interaction on the Internet to cause the social organization as a whole. One of the benefits of online networks is the formation of “specialised communities” (p. 132), where sociability is constructed around specific interests as a consequence of individualism. He stresses that networked individualism is the evolution of social relationship that is “embodied in me-centered networks” (p. 128). This individualised relationship is not a psychological attribute but it is the specific pattern or privatisation of sociability which is “the transition from the predominance of primary relationships (embodied in families and communities) to secondary relationships (embodied in association)” (Castells, *ibid.*). Moreover, the material support for this phenomenon is the development of a communication hybrid between a physical place and a cyberplace (p. 131).

Fuchs (2008) delves into the concept of the individualization of the relationship in more depth. His work on cyberculture reveals that individualisation is “an inherent characteristic of modernism” (p. 306), and the flexible human association in various networks may or may not be perceived as communities. All individuals today see each other as friends, commodities, power, and competitors for jobs and survival. However, a knowledge society emerges as a result of “homologous interests”

that are expressed in collective modes of lifestyle. Fuchs (*ibid.*) observes that “Knowledge-based capitalism and the decrease of industrial labour are the results of capitalist development and the evolution of capitalist technology”, which results in the increase of knowledge workers, who demand “more agility, continuous change, and permanent learning” (p. 306). In relation to virtual communities, he claims that people turn to them because they see the opportunities that guarantee participation and self-fulfilling activities (p. 308). Three levels of virtual communities can be identified as a consequence of these communicative online practices. He summarises the concept of virtual communities in modern society as:

[A] dynamic system that is based on computer networks and application programs (level 1) that enable continuous computer-mediated communication that is regularized and structured by general rules of interaction, shared interests, and general topics of interaction (level 2). From continuous computer-mediated communication cooperation, feelings of togetherness and belonging, shared identity, and common values can emerge (level 3). This level is not reached in all virtual communities; many are structured by competition and the accumulation of reputation and difference. (Fuchs, *ibid.*, p. 333)

In reaction to a consequence of communicative online practices that are emphasized by Fuchs (2008), the netiquette in Pantip is another approach through which this research will contribute to knowledge on Thai Internet Forum Studies. Fuchs (*ibid.*) proves that netiquette emerges in level 2 of his analysis when there is continuous usage into communicate online with others, although a consensus or common values are not required (p. 311). Pantip is actually considered to be virtual community with two perspectives: through its self-identification, on the one hand; and by the concepts discussed here, on the other. The rules of interaction will be explored particularly in

regard to their shared interests in posting and commenting news in the threads of forum. Some Pantip users will be invited to discuss these issues in focus groups. Moreover, their online self-representation will also be investigated, including their use of image and pseudonym.

Anonymity is one of the important qualities of virtual communities, according to Fuchs (2008). The function does not stand on its own, but relates to identity building, and also online behaviour and expressive communication. With its “easy-entry, easy-exist” attribute (Norris, 2004, p. 33), and a lack of nonverbal expression, moral rules or netiquette develop in online communities in order to avoid “violating normative rules of communication” (Fuchs, *ibid.*, p. 314). Belonging, identity, and interest are three of the constituent factors of communities. However, anonymity can have “far-reaching consequences”, because people can change, disguise their real selves, and assume more identities at once (Cantoni and Tardini, 2006, p. 163). This research will also examine this aspect of Pantip’s users to ascertain the merit of news commentary while commentators remain anonymous.

Nevertheless, the qualities of virtual communities are apparently one of the main and foremost discussion issues among Internet studies’ scholars. Baym (2010) is among these, but she proposes alternative views in detailing the virtual community. On the contrary, to find the right definition and to debate on whether the virtual communities are real or not, Baym (*ibid.*) identifies five qualities that are found in online groups. These include the sense of space, shared identities, shared practice, shared resources and support, and interpersonal relationships (p. 75). Although each of

these qualities is worth explaining, this research pays particular attention to the sense of place of Internet fora. The concept of public space and the relevant literatures are therefore reviewed next.

The Internet forum as an online public space

Before the proliferation of the Internet connections which transform the meeting place of some like-minded people from offline to online locations, the traditional café was regarded as one of the most popular meeting places for Thai folk. Chuenkamol (1999) demonstrates that in her hometown in the southern part of Thailand, there are more than 150 traditional cafés that serve as meeting places for local residents who enjoy discussion with others while drinking coffee or tea (p. 5). The elderly and the mature workers are major visitors in the early morning, whereas there is a mix of age and gender in the afternoon, and adolescents are in the majority in the evening (p. 3). Although her study fails to investigate the topics discussed and also overlooks the impact of the fora on community, it shows that the cafés are the place where information is disseminated and are where a free flow of public opinion is seen.

The practices of public discussion, either in Thai traditional cafés, as shown above, or on the computer screen, as seen on Pantip, are similar to the classical bourgeois public sphere that Jürgen Habermas identified in eighteenth-century Western Europe. Green (2010) explains that the bourgeois, in this sense, was not part of the ruling class but were merchants and writers, usually wealthy and educated men, who met in the coffee houses of London and discussed the commercial and political issues taken

from the newspapers and political pamphlets (p. 120). Although the general notion of the public sphere is accredited to many authors, such as Walter Lippman, Hannah Arendt, and John Dewey, today Habermas's particular version is the one with which most scholars associate (Dahlgren, 2001, p. 33). Habermas defines it as: "a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body." (Habermas, 1989, p. 73, cited in Green, 2010, p. 119).

Some scholars accept the notion of a public sphere because it is useful to conceptualise the idea of space where citizens can debate on matters of general and political issues (Rutigliano, 2007, p. 226). Moreover, according to Youngs (2009), it "has traditionally been a core concept in the study of mass media and communications" (p. 128), because it incorporates ideas about "geospatial (territorial) and sociospatial (virtual) realities" (p. 136). However, the key problem is that the early ideas of the public sphere originated in a country where democracy had been highly developed. The fundamental principle that "opinions on matters of concern to the nation and publicly expressed by men outside the government" (Robins and Webster, 2006, p. 93) is, in particular, rejected by numerous commentators. Green (2010), for example, highlights that the coffee house culture excluded women and people who had to work for income (p. 120).

The contemporary culture of the concept has been contested also by many critiques. Sparks (2001) indicates that the empirical status of the public sphere has never existed; it is only that its normative status is the justification for keeping the concept in circulation (p. 76). What is more, its original formulation as singularity is one of the major criticisms today (p. 77). Dahlgren (2001) agrees with Sparks, and he points to the heterogeneous public spheres. He writes “a unitary public sphere actually risks marginalizing and suppressing the diversity of complex societies” (p. 39). Encouraged by the Internet as a medium furthering social fragmentation, Breen (2007) highlights “a multitude of public sphericules”, which is a replacement for the utopian ideal nature of a single public sphere (p. 61). In addition, “the citizen-produced information, knowledge and cultural product available on the Internet” (Green, 2010, p. 121) where individuals can “mix and match their online information diet” in what Youngs (2009, p. 137) calls “the self-selected mini public spheres” are the way to see the Internet in this era. According to McKee (2004, cited in Green, *ibid.*), “the public sphere in contemporary culture has moved on from Habermas’s restricted ideas concerning the bourgeoisie” (p. 121).

From the argument shown above, it is clear that the public sphere is a contentious notion. Although one might dispute that the advance of new communication technologies provides the environment for the realization of this notion in the twenty-first century, this research simply uses “public space” in referring to Pantip. According to Tanner (2001), spaces are the situations in which people share communication, which can be both the geographic space and space in a virtual world (p. 385). Four main issues are associated with online “public spaces”, and these include the access to technologies;

freedom of communication; the structure of deliberation; and the public use of reason (*ibid.*). Yet, from the literatures reviewed here, anonymity, individualism, the open-ended and fragmented nature of the Internet, are among controversial issues in regard to the trustworthiness of online public spaces. In spite of these defects, of which this research is aware, the diversity of opinions in the Internet forum is the main focus for examination. Furthermore, the online participation of the Thai population in debating news taken from mainstream media potentially creates the “agonistic public spaces” where Mouffe (in Carpentier and Cammaerts, 2006) refers to the way of resisting the role of the media who maintain and reproduce hegemony (p. 968). In her recent book, Mouffe (2013) powerfully clarifies the notion of agonistic public spaces. In distinguishing between agonistic approaches and the public space from other approaches, she writes:

According to the accepted view, the public space is the terrain where one aims at creating consensus. For the agonistic approach, on the contrary, the public space is where conflicting points of view are confronted without any possibility of a final reconciliation. Such a conception is clearly very different from the one defended by Jürgen Habermas, who presents what he calls the ‘public sphere’ as the place where deliberation aiming at a rational consensus takes place (p. 92).

Viewed from Mouffe’s perspective, Pantip is not only simply a virtual community, but also resistance to hegemony in mainstream media as a consequence of the different opinions and the wide range of ideas expressed in it. However, from the researcher’s personal perspective, Pantip is a repository for knowledge as a result of its influence on society and its popularity among users. To this end, the reasons they use Pantip are much more persuasive than the concern about

trust and accountability in the forum. Slevin (2000) argues that the Internet is a medium of practical social activity. Its use is “inextricably linked to the kinds of knowledge ability, skills and resources” (p. 113) and its users are “intelligent agents” because they establish and sustain communal relationships (p. 109). Sreberny and Khiabany (2010) point out three further shifts in the nature of intellectual work; these are the Internet, the knowledge society, and knowledge workers (p. 134). In relation to public space, they write:

The social production of intellectual and, more importantly, intellectual debate, requires sufficient public space for such debate to emerge and develop and that the diffusion of new technologies and thus the greater access of ordinary people to express themselves publicly on issues that concern them mean that around the world there is a far greater range of voices speaking ‘intellectually’ than ever before (p. 136).

Sreberny and Khiabany (*ibid.*) also work with Antonio Gramsci’s argument on intellectual work and they are correct to point out that the communicative environment on the Internet challenges Gramsci’s original understanding of intellectual labour. This research responds to Sreberny and Khiabany’s analytical thought about “everyday workers in the information economy” (p. 134) by looking at a Thai Internet forum. The users’ participation is high and their voices are loud. It is therefore equally worth emphasizing the importance of the intellectual input and output of this online public space, that is to say, the content in Pantip and the impact of that content on mainstream media.

The Internet forum as an alternative medium

Another function of the Thai internet forum is as an alternative source of information. One of the empirical explorations to support this argument is that, when typing in a Thai phrase, some of the search results shown in some of the search engines, for example Google.com, derive from information in Pantip. In fact, there is no study conducted in Thailand about this role, and in searching for the correlations between the journalists and the use of the website as a source for their coverage. However, a survey from Middleberg and Associates ¹⁷ (cited in Cantoni and Tardini, 2006, p. 153) reveals that most journalists in North America depend on online fora, although they also believe that message boards and chat groups are the least credible online sources. The findings of this survey present the outward contradiction certainly, but Don Middleberg remarks that “the Internet has become woven into the fabric of modern journalism” and it is “too good a tool to be ignored by the journalists” (Cantoni and Tardini, *ibid.*). For this reason, the present research attempts to discover the chances that an Internet forum may be an information source for journalists in Thailand. Although it is indeed an uneasy claim to make, it could be a hypothesis of this study that Pantip has the potential to be a tool for civic empowerment, if journalists greatly rely on information provided by ordinary people in the fora.

As far as the term ‘alternative media’ is concerned, Couldry and Curran (2003) evaluate related concepts that were provided by John Downing as ‘radical media’ and

¹⁷ The full information and the copy of this study can be ordered online at <http://web.archive.org/web/20040204163318/http://www.middleberg.com/studies/print/fulloverview.cfm>

by Clemencia Rodriguez as 'citizens' media'. They propose this definition: "media production that challenges, at least implicitly, actual concentrations of media power, whatever forms those concentrations may take in different locations" (p. 7). Gumucio Dagron (2004), a development communication specialist with experience in numerous countries in the Global South, highlights that 'alternative media' refers to communication experiences "that emerged as a need to counterbalance the state and/or commercial mass media" (p. 46). Moreover, from his viewpoint, alternative communication articulates the process of social movement and participation within the community. A free spirit is inherent to its nature, and the ability to open dialogue and to allow a different perspective that comes from the public, are the measurement of its success. He concludes: "By promoting participation and ownership of media, communication contributes to build strong identities, independence of thought, and societies that are democratically organized and represented" (p. 61).

As far as the previous studies on alternative media are concerned, Woo-Young (2005) explores the characteristics and development of Korea's online public space. The concept of the alternative, in his work, has been viewed from both active and passive perceptions. The former means the counter-discourse that challenges the existing social order, whereas the latter is the replacement of the existing media (p. 396). Although the website is, in his study, regarded as being part of the alternative media, it is at the same time an exclusive and intolerant space. Groshek and Han (2011) provide notable critical theories of alternative media in their comparative study on the coverage of globalization. Their analysis indicates that the purpose of 'alternative' is best served as "a complementary rather than singular point of media access" (p. 1538).

Kejanhoğlu *et al.* (2012) define alternative media in their examination of a network's online site in Turkey as being: "non-dominant, counter-hegemonic media that prioritizes its distinct relationship with its audience" (p. 275). The results show that various social segments strongly demand not only to participate in the production of news content but to receive the news via alternative channels also.

In general, what previous studies indicate is the dignity of alternative media. They provide access to alternative voices, arguments, sets of facts, and ways of seeing things around us (Harcup, 2003, p. 371). These attributes are presumably why journalists are attracted to the information in the Internet fora, although the trustworthiness is low. By keeping this concept in mind, this research will ask journalists in Thailand their reasons for paying attention to Pantip and how important the alternative voices in the fora are. Moreover, with the function of Pantip users being, at the same time, news readers, sources, and producers, their practices in using Pantip will be examined, and the impact of those practices on journalists will also be investigated. Granted that the relationship between journalists and Internet forum users has never been explored before, the next part of this chapter will testify to this belief.

Previous research on the Internet forum

Online databases were used in order to search for previous studies that related to this research topic. Internet forum, online forum, and online discussion were used in the word search, focusing only on the title of project. Additional materials that resulted from this search included the doctoral theses, written in the English language, and available in the last ten years (2003-2013). ProQuest, the database for searching full text theses in the humanities and social science in the US, showed 28 results. Electronic Theses Online Service (EThOS), a web resource provided by British Library, showed 13 results of doctoral works completed in the UK. However, the majority of these studies examined the Internet forum on its function of educational software (for example, in the US, Sherlick, 2005; De Sousa, 2006; in the UK, Kaur, 2009; Bain, 2011; Unwin, 2012). Some studies have explored the relationship between tutors and learners (for example, van de Sande, 2008), whereas others have looked for knowledge construction and digital literacy practices (for example, Costanza, 2005; Pate, 2008; Buraphadeja, 2010; Chen, 2010).

The quantitative analysis of the Internet as an alternative forum of expression was researched by Muhtaseb (2004). Employing the theory of uses and gratification and the spiral of silence, the finding found no relationship between Arab Americans' perceptions of US public opinion and their motives for using the Internet for expressive needs. In regard to the Internet forum as an online community, two qualitative researches were found. While Presi (2007) focused on identity and revealed that reading identity online is a much richer and more complex process than

conveying identity, Brett (2010) focused on social-cognitive literacy, with which members used the forum to interpret their lived experiences and to explore their implications for socialization and identity development. A similar project was conducted by Walker (2011), but publicly-oriented discussion was defined as networked public talk. The results suggested that informal talk online can be understood as a process of making sense of public issues. Dunne (2008) was concerned about the political disengagement of citizens within liberal democracies. He thus researched the Internet forum through its aspect of supporting participatory and deliberative electronic democracy.

Another web resource that was used to search for previous studies on the Internet forum is Primo Central. This is a cross-search database provided by SOAS, that covers a wide range of information from various providers. Only peer-reviewed journals and articles published in the last 10 years were called for this time. The search results displayed 67 scholarly articles, of which a large number analysed the negative dimensions of the Internet forum, including impersonation, pornography, sexual offences, and libel and slander. Some of them discussed shopping, caregiving and health issues. However, one of the world's most notorious free access Internet fora is Japan's Channel 2. With over five million people accessing it each month, and all its dysfunctional aspects, which are due to "numerous ignominious entries" and "harmful content", Kaigo and Watanabe (2007, pp. 1248-9) stress its synonym as being "Internet pandemonium". They write: "Thirty minutes spent reading the posting on Channel 2 can be enough to turn some people away in disgust, never to access the forum again" (p. 1265). Indeed, the threads in Pantip have been monitored by website

administrators as already explained in Chapter One. However, unlike Japan's Channel 2, there is no evidence to suggest such notoriety for Thailand's Pantip.

Previous research on Pantip.com

Pantip first introduced its service on 7th October 1996. Throughout the eighteen years of its being, twelve research projects have been conducted that are based on this website. All of them were submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Communication and Media Studies in Thailand. The table below summarises some details of each project.

Table 3.1 A summary of previous research on Pantip.com

No.	Year	Researcher's name	Area of investigation	Methodology (ies) employed
1.	1999	Rattanaalee	The function and usefulness of computer-mediated communication in two Thai Internet forum; Pantip and Sanook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content analysis • Interviewed forum users via e-mail
2.	2001	Phenphan	The type, usage, and meaning of the discourse in Pantip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discourse analysis
3.	2002	Worawan	Symbolic interaction in Pantip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semiotics
4.	2003	Wansika	Loneliness in virtual community in two Thai Internet forum; Pantip and Sanook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content analysis • Interviewed forum users via the Microsoft Network (MSN)
5.	2006	Pakaphan	The relationship between the public agenda in Pantip and the media agenda in the newspapers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content analysis • Face-to-face interviews with journalists

Table 3.1 A summary of previous research on Pantip.com (continued)

No.	Year	Researcher's name	Area of investigation	Methodology (ies) employed
6.	2006	Atchara	The type of content and the benefit from word-of-mouth communication about films in Pantip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content analysis • Focus group of Pantip users
7.	2007	Suthana	The opinion of Pantip users on the credibility of the conversation threads about films and the use of that information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey research with questionnaires
8.	2008	Photchaman	The characteristics and genre of gays' narratives in an online literature community in Pantip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content analysis
9.	2009	Pitchayaporn	The use and gratifications of information about beauty in Pantip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey research with questionnaires
10.	2009	Chartnopkun	The criteria used by Pantip users to evaluate the credibility of the conversation threads about travel in Pantip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey research with questionnaires
11.	2010	Chanakarn	The quality of criticism on entertainment issues in Pantip and its impact on mainstream media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content analysis • Non-participant observation • Online interview Pantip users • Face-to-face interviews with Pantip webmasters and journalists
12.	2011	Panitchaya	The type of content and the benefit of word-of-mouth communication about mobile phones on Pantip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content analysis • Face-to-face interview Pantip users

Briefly, the Internet forum is a virtual place on the Internet where people can meet and exchange views. In the Thai context, Pantip can be regarded as an online community, a public space, and as an alternative source of information. However, previous studies on the Internet forum overlook its role as a powerful tool of empowerment and democratisation. Similarly, most studies of Pantip have only been carried out in a small number of areas, and they have focused mainly on the content of conversation threads. Such expositions are unsatisfactory as they are unable to interpret the reasons for users' participation and they are unable to explain the socio-political changes in Thailand. Although Pakaphan (2006) and Chanakarn (2010) have examined the relationship between Pantip and the mainstream media, their works only dealt with entertainment topics. Moreover, evidence of this relationship is inconclusive and the process of sample selection is unclear. There is thus space for this research, with its focus on the role of the Internet forum in supporting social movement and democratisation in Thailand.

3.3 PARTICIPATORY JOURNALISM

Definitions and functions

The idea behind this concept is that people without professional journalism training can use the tools of modern technology and the global distribution of the Internet to create and augment media on their own or in collaboration with others (Glaser, 2010, p. 578). Although it is most widely known by this term, many media scholars have observed this practice and have identified it variously in the past decade. These concepts include '*grassroots reporting*' (Bowman and Willis, 2003; Lasica, 2003),

'postmodern journalism' (Wall, 2005), *'do-it-yourself (DIY) journalism'* (Russell, 2007), *'accidental journalists'* (Allan *et al.*, 2007), *'citizen journalism'* (Allan and Thorsen, 2009; Kelly, 2009) *'bottom-up and distributed journalism'* (Glaser, 2010). Whatever it is called, Bowman and Willis (2003) highlight that the intent of this participation is to provide the independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging and relevant information that a democracy requires (p. 9). Moreover, the function of participation can be found in the form of commentary, filtering and editing, fact-checking, annotative reporting, open-source reporting and peer review, audio/video broadcasting and knowledge management (p. 33). The most crucial point made so far is that this type of journalism is an essential component of media ecology. Rettberg (2008) proves that it offers ordinary people the opportunity to report first-hand on occurrences, rather than relying on coverage by traditional journalism (p. 89).

It is worth noting that the rise of participatory journalism primarily results from technology (Kelly, 2009, p. 5) and the concept flourishes in social media (Bowman and Willis, 2003, p. 21). However, beyond its definition, participatory journalism reverses the sender-receiver process of traditional journalism. "Whereas newspaper, television and web media use the journalists as gatekeepers in the process of selecting and presenting news, in the participatory journalism format the journalist is a "shepherd" in the process", writes Glaser (2004, cited in Bentley *et al.*, 2007, p. 241). In considering the "publish, then filter" model (Bowman and Willis, 2003, p. 21), the forms in which participatory journalism takes shape are those of user-generated content or self-moderated citizen media; collaborative publishing and aggregation sites; Instant Messaging and Short Message Services or peer-to-peer

communication; weblogs, and Internet fora. Through highlighting the knowledge gap in this field of study, this research investigates the concept of participatory journalism in an Internet forum in Thailand.

The Internet fora are methods of “asynchronous communication” (Bowman and Willis, 2003, p. 21), which means that all of the participants do not have to be online at the same time to communicate. Participants also have more time to refine their responses and this leads to more thoughtful contributions (*ibid.*). Some media scholars of this form of participatory journalism think that both challenging and supporting each other are found in the fora. In terms of the challenge, on the one hand, Internet fora are the oldest and still the most popular forms for participation, according to Bowman and Willis (*ibid.*). On the other hand, they are presumably the most overlooked way in which communities can stay in touch and share news, as far as Glaser (2010, p. 587) is concerned. In terms of support, Bowman and Willis (*ibid.*) have discovered that many online media outlets think fora provide little value to the audience. Some media outlets have undergone legal problems, and the lack of sufficient staff to moderate and maintain fora, mean that they have eventually abandoned the Internet fora (p. 23). Glaser (*ibid.*) agrees with this point, and remarks that the content quality can be low due to little moderation. Moreover, the subject matter in the Internet fora can be intensely local to the users’ neighborhoods and so contain very local information (p. 587).

This research contests the argument above and attempts to shine new light on this issue by investigating Thai Internet fora where the forum's popularity and a huge amount of participation have remained since it was established in October 1996. Bowman and Willis (2003) provide in-depth analysis on the self-correction process. They write:

The Internet forum, moderators police the content and actions of participants, sometimes removing and editing parts of the conversations that violate the standards of the community. These moderators are sometimes appointed by the community; in other cases they are appointed by the host or owners of the fora. However, in many discussion communities, the participants police each other, sharing their views of when particular behaviors or actions are inappropriate (p. 21).

Bowman and Willis (*ibid.*) also note the strengths of fora. Most have a relatively low barrier to entry, with especially, a low level of commitment. However, this turns into weaknesses. Active and large fora can get noisy, with so many posts from so many members. As a result, it is difficult to determine which information is meaningful or useful (p. 21).

The potential benefits of participatory journalism for mainstream news media

The central aspects of the classic paradigm of journalistic practices seem to have been challenged over the last few years by ideas of participatory journalism, especially in the USA and Europe, according to Sreberny and Khiabany (2010, p. 161). Kelly (2009) stresses that journalism's failures are the catalyst for action (p. 6). Surveys, such as that conducted by PEW Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, have shown

that in 2007 “Majorities of American continued to say that journalists are often inaccurate (55%), do not care about the people they report on (53%), are biased (55%), one-sided (66%) and try to cover up their mistakes (63%)” (Kelly, *ibid.*, p.7). In his review of participatory journalism, Glaser (2010) points out that news producers and journalists in traditional media are not “the exclusive center of knowledge on a subject” (p. 578). In order to illustrate that the audience knows more collectively than the reporters do alone, he argues: “Now, many of traditional media outlets are trying to harness the knowledge of their audience either through comments at the end of stories they post online or by creating citizen journalists database of contributors or sources for stories” (Glaser, *ibid.*).

Although the competency of ordinary people in reporting news is debatable, a large and growing body of literature has investigated this point, and many scholars in the field have agreed on the same aspects. Lasica (2003) has criticised that while many journalists are describing people who participate in citizen media as being self-interested, or as unskilled amateurs, many of these ordinary people look upon the mainstream media as an arrogant, élitist club that puts its own version of self-interest and economic survival above the societal responsibility of the free press (p. 71). With regard to professionalism, journalists in mainstream media organisation are trained and recognised, unionised labour, and often politically neutral. Participatory journalists are, by contrast, often untrained, unpaid, non-unionised and highly politicised (Sreberny and Khiabany, 2010, p. 161). Reich (2008) proves that citizen reporters are restricted by some characteristics of their enterprise, including being in a non-established organisation, the confluence of weaknesses, the inefficient division of labour, limited journalistic

know-how, and weak organisational control. However, it is evident that citizen reporters originate and produce their material from “the vantage point of outsiders-beyond the purview of the existing machinery that is geared towards providing mainstream news with a constant flow of raw data” (p. 751). As a consequence, the expected outcome of this research is to illustrate the emerging role of the Internet forum in journalism. News stories can be more correct and more deeply informative with the assistance of the audiences.

Furthermore, participatory journalism is going to “force a reshaping of the current theories” about online journalism, according to Deuze (2003, cited in Bently *et al.*, 2007, p. 241). Websites for sharing and discussion, which are good examples of online journalism, offer places for users to connect with one another and to exchange ideas in an open forum (*ibid.*, p. 242). Kelly (2009) notes that participatory journalism on the Internet allows groups of like-minded people to find each other, coalesce around common interests, and communicate with one another. This engenders a sense of community (p. 25). Bowman and Willis (2003) use the word “networked communities” and acknowledge that it is “a new media ecosystem..., where online communities discuss and extend the stories created by mainstream media” (p. 13). Moreover, participatory journalism contrasts with traditional journalism in regard to its structure and organisation. Bowman and Willis (*ibid.*) explain:

Traditional media are created by hierarchical organisations that are built for commerce. Their business models are broadcast and advertising focused. They value rigorous editorial workflow, profitability and integrity. Participatory journalism is created by networked communities that value conversation, collaboration and egalitarianism over profitability (p. 12).

In Thailand, Pantip is a popular website. Although it is a commercial online medium, the users' participation has no connection with the profitability and business model of the website. On the contrary, its open environment creates a free-flow of information in the conversation threads in which networked community and participatory journalism appear to be beyond doubt. This research will present the dynamic role of Thai Internet users and the relationship between the online citizen journalists and the professional ones in the traditional media. If journalists define their work as being objective and as showing social responsibility, then the public voices would have been taken into account. In the same way, if their coverage were brought to debate by audience, then mainstream journalists would presumably pay attention to the criticism. The impact of audience agency in Pantip on news organisations can be seen in Thailand, as demonstrated in Chapter One. As a result, this research will prove the potential contribution of the Thai Internet forum to support journalistic work. The role of Pantip users appears to be as journalists' helpers in the process of news production. This participatory function, in the form of commentary and fact-checking, would develop the quality and the accuracy of news in Thailand.

Previous research on participatory journalism

According to Kelly (2009), this concept is defined more by *what* it is than by *where* it is (p. 17). As pointed out earlier that participatory journalism appears in many forms, however, the research in the past decade has been extensively conducted in regard to blogs. Kelly, again, highlights that most of the early attention about the audience's shift from receiver to producer was focused on blogs. Blogs are often seen as the symbol of

participatory journalism, but they are a problematic entity to study in the overall context of participatory journalism (Kelly, *ibid.*, pp. 22-23).

There is a large volume of published studies that describes blogs in respect to their role of participatory journalism, online journalism and civic empowerment. However, these studies concentrate on particular regions, including the USA and European countries (in the USA, e.g. Deuze, 2003; Singer, 2003; Kerbel and Bloom, 2005; MacDougall, 2005; McIntosh, 2005; Singer, 2005; Su *et al.*, 2005; Wall, 2005; Robinson, 2006; Farrell and Drezner, 2008; for the European countries see, e.g., Matheson, 2004; O'Sullivan and Heinonen, 2008). Many books have investigated the blogosphere universally. For example, *Citizen Journalism: Global Perspectives* (Allan and Thorsen, 2009) illustrates the democratic cultures of blogging and citizenship in a variety of the most significant topics and from many Asian nations, such as, India, South Korea and Vietnam. Additionally, *Blogistan: The Internet and Politics in Iran* (Sreberny and Khiabany, 2010) demonstrates how online participation is celebrated as an agent of social change in an Islamic country, like Iran. Nevertheless, the key problem is that there are no studies or analysis of participatory journalism in Thailand. Research on this subject is essential, because the findings from foreign countries are unsatisfactory in representation of the local circumstances.

As far as the journalistic practice, value, and influence of blogs are concerned, previous studies have reported that newsworthiness and narrative are the limited models of conventionalised forms of print and broadcast news. This has been seen to be old, stereotypical and the formula which journalists themselves have failed to reform

(Matheson, 2004, p. 459.) Moreover, Matheson (*ibid.*, p. 452) proves that the prominent role of the blog as an instant critique of mainstream news media, and the faster speed in reporting events, in comparison to traditional news agencies, values blogging by bringing together the conventional ideas of quality journalism. McIntosh (2005, p. 386) concludes that journalists in traditional news agencies attend to blogs for sources in news stories. Robinson (2006, p. 75) discovers that the audience agency is changing. Blog readers have the opportunity “to react not only to what has been written in the blogs, but to ‘repair’ what the print publication published.” Glaser (2010, p. 584) verifies that, in some countries, bloggers have played an important role as participatory journalists, reporting on subjects that the state-controlled media would not allow professional journalists to cover.

It is clear from the above that the study of participatory journalism in the past decade has paid much attention to blogs. Researchers recognise the blog as the medium in which the audience’s agency is authorized and current issues from the mainstream media are discussed, modified and reported. However, blogs do not hold the central position in participatory journalism studies as there are other forms of computer-mediated communications. Moreover, the findings of western scholars are unable to represent entirely the societal reality. In Thailand, blogs tend to be less active in public debate, while the Internet forum is a preferred online space where public opinion is articulated and the coverage of stories from the mainstream news agencies is criticised. As a consequence, the user’s practices in news participation are far more convincing in the Internet forum than they are in blogs.

In conclusion, this chapter has been involved with the concepts of the Internet forum, participatory journalism, and the way in which these two issues relate to processes of democratisation under the auspices of Thai power (authoritarianism). In Thai political history, the previous studies suggest that the educated middle-class population plays a key role in the country's democratic revolution. This research considers this group of people to be the actors in social movement and socio-political change. Pantip is the online meeting place for Thai people. However, from its function and usage, Pantip can also be considered to be a possible agonistic public space and an alternative source of information due to the intellectual voices on the website. Additionally, the practice of news criticism in Pantip is a participatory journalism which probably has benefits for the mainstream news media. Even so, this capability of the Internet forum has been overlooked by media researchers because it is considered to have little value to the audience in terms of news production and consumption.

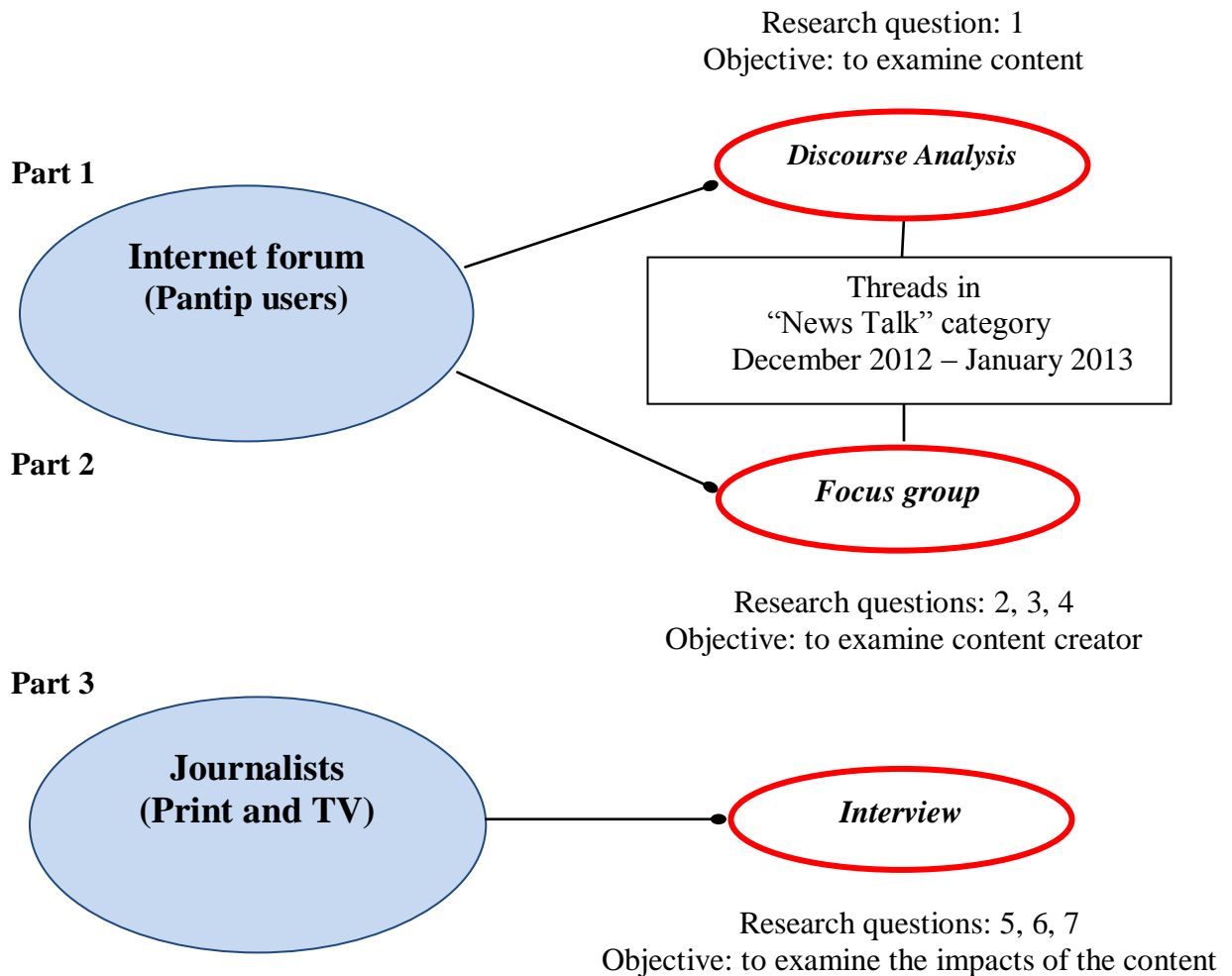
This research explores the power of ordinary people in a Thai Internet forum and investigates the relationship between these people and professional journalists. The main contribution of the research is to testify as to whether or not Pantip is a powerful tool for Thai democratisation. Furthermore, it attempts to reveal their purposes in using this website. The targets of this investigation include the conversation threads (the content), Pantip users (the content creators), and the journalists in mainstream media (the impact of the content). The details of the samples and the approaches to data collection are thoroughly explained in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

This research attempts to answer seven questions. In order to deliver these answers, data collection was established through three parts, based on the three objectives of the study; to examine the content, to examine the content creators, and to examine the impacts of the content. Figure 4.1 presents all of the research questions, methodology, and samples employed in this study. The details of each part of the data collection will be explained below. Firstly, part one is the discourse analysis which is the first methodology used in this research. Then, part two is concerned with the second methodology: focus group discussions. Finally, interviewing of professional journalists is in part three.

Figure 4.1 The diagram of methodologies used in the research



4.1 PART 1: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Discourse analysis provides a general framework to *problem-oriented social research*. It allows the integration of different dimensions of *interdisciplinarity* and multiple perspectives on the object investigated.

(Wodak, 2008, p. 2)

The objective of the first part of this study is to examine the content in the conversation threads on Pantip. One of the major behaviours of Pantip users is that they take all or some section of a news story from the mainstream media to post in their forum. This content appears at the top, as part of the original message with its title. Then it is followed by the debate, discussion and criticism that is written by the forum creator her/himself, and by other forum members.

This activity is a form of participatory journalism which currently flourishes in social media, according to Bowman and Willis (2003, p. 21). The function of participation can be seen as fitting into nine categories; these are commentary, filtering and editing, fact-checking, grassroots reporting, annotative reporting, open-source reporting and peer review, audio/video broadcasting, advertising, and knowledge management (Bowman and Willis, *ibid.*). However, only the function of commentary, which can be seen in the debate threads, is taken into consideration in this research.

As far as the methodology is concerned, discourse analysis is considered to be an appropriate method, the use of which will help to deliver an answer to the first research question: *How do Pantip users manipulate their power in the forum?* This method was chosen because it is the analysis of conversation through focusing on the linguistic features of text. John Fiske (cited in Philo, 2007, p. 176) remarks that language serves the interests of a section of a society, and discourse can be linked to power and social interests. Fairclough (1989) indicates that discourse analysis is concerned with the way in which discourse builds social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge or belief and how these discourses maintain power through their ideological properties. Regarding a heuristic for analysis, Johnstone (2008, p. 10) acknowledges that discourse is shaped by participants.

Sample selection and research tool

The debate threads in Pantip were explored. The samples were selected from the category “*News Talks*” between December, 2012, and January, 2013. In this period, there had been a major change in the website in terms of its features and content administration. The management teams informed the site’s users that all the modifications were made for the up-to-date search engine technology and for a larger data store room. This change actually had no consequences for this research. However, it became an advantage as the researcher was able to select the threads from the old Pantip version in December, 2012, and the new one in January, 2013.

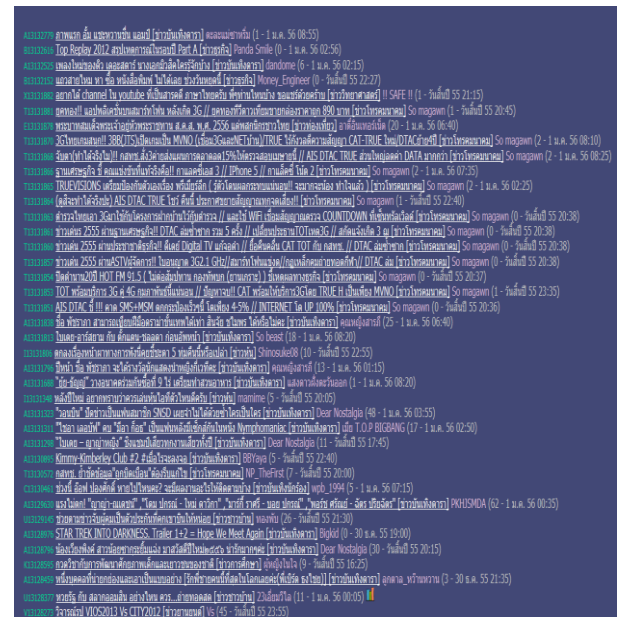
The screenshot of the frontend page of the old Pantip version

Source: <http://2g.pantip.com/cafe/>



The screenshot of the news-talks-category page of the old Pantip version

Source: <http://2g.pantip.com/cafe/news/>



The screenshot of the frontend page of the new Pantip version

Source: <http://pantip.com>



The screenshot of the news-talks-category page of the new Pantip version

Source: <http://pantip.com/forum>



The “*News Talks*” category in Pantip was chosen because it was a place where economic, political, cultural and social issues from the mainstream news media were put together. The research criteria were set to diminish the number of threads in December, 2012, and January, 2013, which consisted of almost 2,500 original messages. The criteria chosen must be;

- That a thread was composed of more than 20 conversation threads on one topic between the forum starter and the forum’s debaters, regardless of the particular coverage of the stories.
- The source of the information must be stated clearly, for example, the name of the newspaper or news website, by the forum starter. If it is made up of coverage by a “citizen reporter”, alternative sources of information, such as a witness to the incident or government officers, must be seen.
- Rumour, satire, indirect commercial and public relations were to be excluded.

From these criteria, 52 original messages were successfully recruited. The researcher sent electronic mails individually to the in-box of each person who had posted one of those 52 original messages via the Pantip website. The text included an introduction to the research project, the purpose of the study, the requirement for consent to collect their personal data, and an invitation to the second part of this research; that is, to the focus groups. For those who did not reply within two weeks, a second electronic mail was sent, but this time they were asked to give feedback, even if participation in the study was going to be avoided. Eventually, within a month of February, 2013, eighteen Pantip users confirmed their participation in the focus groups and permitted the researcher to collect and analyse their data in the forum.

Table 4.1 Lists of Pantip's users who agreed to participate in the study

No.	Pseudonyms of research participants in original format (with translation into English in parenthesis for future reference)
1	23เอี่ยมวิไล (23Grandeur)
2	ขอบฟ้าบูรพา (Oriental Skyline)
3	คนหน้าบาน (Big-jaw Person)
4	ญี่ปุ่น35 (Japan35)
5	น้ำลิโอ (Uncle Leo)
6	ผมชื่อ OZ (My name is OZ)
7	ไฟทูน (Phaitoon)
8	เลขาลิขิต (Destined by Hand)
9	หมอหมู (Dr.Mooh)
10	หมาป่าดำ (Black Fox)
11	หนุ่มเมืองใต้ (Southern Guy)
12	Anemone2526
13	Birdeyevew
14	JD300
15	Jesus2000 --=AnThraX=--
16	Khmer Su-rin
17	Obi-Wan Ben Kenobi
18	So Magawn

With regard to the approach of the analysis, the conversation threads in these eighteen original messages were taken into consideration. Not only were the opinions and criticism of the forum starter included, but also those of the forum's debaters. One of the tools provided by Pantip is that the forum readers or forum participants are able to express their feelings on the content of the thread. There are six types of emoticons to symbolize six types of feelings; those are (1) to be satisfied (2) to die laughing (3) to be enamoured (4) to be tearful (5) to be dreadful (6) to be surprised. Only threads that received the most "satisfied" emoticons in a topic were purposely selected. This means 18 discourses from 18 original messages, in which the comments had been found to be useful by Pantip readers, were considered representative for the analysis.

The researcher applied the analytical framework designed by Orawan (2003). In her study, Orawan explores the works of three discourse philosophers; Michel Foucault, Norman Fairclough and Teun van Dijk. Then, she selects and integrates important variables with which to conceptualise the frameworks for her discourse analysis, particularly in the Thai cases. These variables encompass power relations, belief or individual attitude, hegemony, identity, context, intertextuality, text, discursive practices (various forms of communication), and socio-cultural practices (political, economic, and social context). The results show that her frameworks are standardised and could be applied well to the Thai cases. Accordingly, it is evident that this framework can be used with this research also. The table below presents this analytical framework.

Table 4.2 Analytical framework for discourse analysis

Discursive practices Intertextuality and socio-cultural practices	Is there the reproduction of a power relationship?	Is there the restructuring of a power relationship?	Is there the challenge of hegemony?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the macro level? *	Is there the technique of using discourse at the micro level? **
Economic context					
Political context					
Cultural context					
Belief / Individual attitude					

Source: Orawan, 2003, p. 76.

* “The use of discourse at the macro level” refers to the use of the formal conformity to the social norm, for example; Acts and institutional regulations, in the texts of the conversation threads.

** “The use of discourse at the micro level” refers to the use of informal language to give local meaning and coherence; for example, words expressing politeness or insult in the texts of the conversation threads.

The researcher also applied the theory of speech acts (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1975, cited in Orawan, 2003, p. 17) and the strategies of politeness in language usage (Brown and Levinson, 1987, cited in Orawan, 2003, p. 82) to analyse the discourse in Pantip’s comments. In speech acts, an illocutionary act is one in which it is not only an attempt to communicate, but is also the expression of an attitude of the speaker. The table below shows the classification of illocutionary speech acts, or primitive illocutionary forces, with their components in terms of meaning, representation and condition.

Table 4.3 The components of the five illocutionary forces¹⁸ (Cooren, 2000, p. 297, cited in Orawan, 2003, p. 79).

Primitive Illocutionary Force	Point	Propositional Content Condition	Preparatory Condition	Sincerity Condition
<i>Assertive</i>	Consists in representing as actual a state of affairs	Neutral	The speaker has reasons or evidence for the truth of the propositional content.	The speaker believes the propositional content.
<i>Commissive</i>	Consists in committing the speaker to a future course of action	The propositional content must represent a future course of action of a speaker.	The speaker is capable of carrying out the action.	The speaker intends to carry out the action.
<i>Directive</i>	Consists in making an attempt to get the hearer to do something.	The propositional content must represent a future course of action of the hearer.	The hearer is capable of carrying out the action.	The speaker desires or wants the hearer to carry out the action.
<i>Declaration</i>	Consists in performing an action which brings into existence a state of affairs by representing oneself as performing that action.	The propositional content must represent a present course of action of the speaker.	The speaker is capable of carrying out this action in his utterance.	The speaker believes, intends and desires to carry out this action.
<i>Expressive</i>	Consists of expressing propositional attitudes of the speaker about a state of affairs.	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral

¹⁸ See: François Cooren. (2000). 'Toward another ideal speech situation: A critique of Habermas' re-interpretation of speech act theory', *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 86 (3), pp. 295-317.

The strategies of politeness refer to the way in which communicators attempt to avoid the risk of “losing face”¹⁹. These strategies are:

- (1) Bald on record²⁰; this strategy will be used if there is a very low degree of risk. The relationship between communicators, such as that between a teacher and student, is asymmetrical because the language used is straightforward.
- (2) Positive politeness is redress directed to the addressee’s positive face. The strategy includes attending to the hearer, seeking agreement, being optimistic, presupposition manipulation, and joking.
- (3) Negative politeness is a redressive action that is addressed to the addressee’s negative face. The strategy includes being conventionally indirect, questioning, giving deference, apologizing, and impersonalizing the speaker and the hearer.
- (4) Off record; the speaker will provide a number of defensible interpretations for him/herself if there is a high risk of losing face. These include the use of hints, tautology, metaphors, ambiguous and over-generalized language.

As far as the procedure of the analysis is concerned, the coverage of a story or, in other words, the original messages posted at the beginning of the thread by eighteen Pantip users, were first summarised. Then, this was followed by analysis of the discursive practice, intertextuality, and the socio-cultural practices which appeared in the conversation threads. The use of discourse at the macro and micro level was combined in the analytical framework, since it involved the significance of the language used in conversation; as Savin-Baden and Major (2013) point out

¹⁹ In social interaction, Goffman (1972) defines “face” as “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact.” (p.5).

²⁰ This terminology is used by Brown and Levinson (1987, cited in Orawan, 2003, p. 82).

“meaning...resides not only in what a participant says but also the way in which it is said” (p. 419). The findings from the first part of this study can be called “big picture analysis”, which is an attempt to explain the way of which Thai citizens manipulate their power on the online platform today.

4.2 PART 2: FOCUS GROUP

Some of the problems that would be appropriate for the focus group method include...discovering factors that influence opinions, attitudes and behaviours; and generating new thoughts or ideas about a situation.

(Wimmer and Dominick, 2006, p. 132)

The focus group is the second method used in this study in order to examine the content creators and Pantip users, and also to deliver an answer to the research questions:

2: Why do the Internet forum users participate on the site?

3: What are the practices and netiquettes that are performed in the debate, and in responding to the coverage which the Internet forum users have taken from mainstream news media?

4: What are the roles that the Internet forum users have played for mainstream news media?

Many scholars in the field, for example, Krueger and Casey, 2009; Savin-Baden and Major, 2013; Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990; Wimmer and Dominick, 2006, agree that focus group analysis is an appropriate method through which to understand how people feel or think about a specific topic, issue or subject through the conversation of participants. Moreover, for this research, focus group can generate a diversity of explanation, and appear to mitigate any limitations of the conclusion drawn from the discourse analysis. As Philo (2007) notes:

...discourse analysis which remains text-based encounters a series of problems specifically in its ability to show: (1) the origins of competing discourses and how they relate to different social interests; (2) the diversity of social accounts compared to what is present (and absent) in a specific text (p. 185).

It is worth noting that the focus group method has its drawbacks. The sample sizes that normally consist of volunteers (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006, p. 131); that are often small and discrete with lots of voices and views in a superficial depiction (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p. 390) result in limitations for data generalization to a larger population (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990, p. 17). However, this method has attractive features. If one considers the fact that participation in the thread in Pantip is a group discussion, one must consider focus group another form of communication which is set non-computer mediation communities. Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) highlight that the focus group allows “respondents to react to and build upon the responses of other group members” and this “may result in the production of data or ideas that might not have been uncovered in individual interviews” (p. 16). Wimmer and Dominick (2006) similarly stress that comments on each other’s viewpoint

in the focus group's discussion lead to a useful snowball effect for the researcher (p. 130). Moreover, conducting three or more focus groups on the same topic can reduce the drawbacks relating to the representation of a larger population (p. 132).

Sample selection and the approach to data collection and analysis

Samples for the study were derived through the same process as those for the discourse analysis but, in lieu of the text in the threads, the forum creators who posted the original message were invited to a focus group. The data collection concentrated particularly on Pantip users' media usage, their value position, aim, action, posting practices, skills, knowledge, online ethics, netiquette, and their perspective on mainstream media, as well as on their role and identity. The guiding questions and the core areas covered in the group conversation are presented in the boxes below:

Research question 2: Why do the Internet forum users participate in the site?	
Guiding questions in focus group	Core areas covered in the questions
1. How do you consume news media in general? 2. Why do you use Pantip? 3. What do you do in Pantip? 4. What are the benefits of using Pantip? 5. <i>(With the examples of news in Pantip posted by focus group participants, printed out by researcher as focus group moderator)</i> Why do you have to take this particular news to the public at this particular time, and in Pantip?	Pantip users' - media usage - value position - aim - action

Research question 3: What are the practices and netiquettes that are performed in the debate, and in responding to the coverage which the Internet forum users have taken from mainstream news media?	
Guiding questions in focus group	Core areas covered in the questions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Could you please describe the process of posting news in Pantip? 2. Are there any particular skills related to posting news in Pantip? What are they? Where did you learn these skills? 3. To what extent do you control the content in the conversation thread? In what way? Why? 4. Do you have principles, ethics, or informal rules to follow? If you do, what are they? How do you use them in Pantip? 5. What do you do to the ideas that counter those of yours in the conversation thread? 6. What do you do to discourteous forum participants? 	Pantip users' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - posting practices - skills - knowledge - online ethics - netiquette

Research question 4: What are the roles that the Internet forum users have played for mainstream news media?	
Guiding questions in focus group	Core areas covered in the questions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are your views on mainstream news media? 2. What are your views on professional journalists? 3. In your opinion, what is your role in media and on society in general? 4. Does anonymity allow you to be able to say anything in forum? 5. As the Internet forum's users, how do you define or describe yourself? Citizen journalist? 	The perspective of Pantip users on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thai mainstream news media - their role - their identity

Concerning the approach to the data collection, there were three processes involving both the researcher and the participants, including pre-focus group, during focus groups and post-focus group. The pre-focus group related to booking the venue and sending the invitation by electronic mails confirming the time and place of meeting to all participants. The venue was the Living Room Coffee and Bakery Shop, situated on Surawong Road in central Bangkok. The reason for choosing this venue was because it is easily accessible by local transportation; the meeting room is fully equipped and set in a quiet area of building; and refreshments are available throughout the day. All participants were informed by telephone about the fees paid for their participation in the project and, also, the compensation for their parking costs.

Pilot testing was conducted in the pre-focus group process. This was done by inviting the researcher's friends and colleagues who are Pantip users to join in a group of six for a rehearsal and to check the reliability of the research tools. Moreover, as Savin-Baden and Major (2013) suggest, the common characteristics of respondents result in the openness of thoughts and comments in the focus group (p. 388). To this end, each prospective participant was asked about their gender, age, and educational level for group allocation. Table 4.2 shows the name of the participant and her/his slot. However, it is necessary to note that all of the participants demanded anonymity. Only pseudonyms are mentioned throughout the thesis.

Table 4.4 Focus group participants and allocations

Group	Pseudonyms of participants	Date	Time
1	Anemone2526 Oriental Skyline (ขอบฟ้าบูรพา) Southern Guy (หนุ่มเมืองใต้) So Magawn	Saturday 16 March 2013	10.00 – 12.00 hours
2	Birdeyevuew Black Fox (หมาป่าดำ) My name is OZ (ผมชื่อ OZ) Obi-Wan Ben Kenobi	Saturday 16 March 2013	13.00 – 15.00 hours
3	Dr. Mooh (หมอหนู) Japan35 (ญี่ปุ่น35) JD300 Jesus2000 --=AnThraX== Khmer Su-rin	Saturday 23 March 2013	10.00 – 12.00 hours
4	23Grandeur (23เอี่ยมวิไล) Big-jaw Person (คนหน้าบาน) Destined by Hand (เลขาลิขิต) Phaitoon (ไพฑูรย์) Uncle Leo (น้ำลิโอ)	Saturday 23 March 2013	13.00 – 15.00 hours

The focus group process is related to ethical issues and the conducting of conversation. On arrival, the participants were individually told about the research's objectives and the procedure for the whole session. Then, the consent form was delivered, requesting permission to collect and use their personal data in the study. Finally,

they were asked to complete a written research questionnaire while having refreshments. Wimmer and Dominick (2006) describe the questionnaire as an “extended focus group” which “covers the material that will be discussed during the group session, forces respondents to “commit” to a particular answer or position before entering the group” (p. 130). In this study, the questionnaire consisted of both open-ended and closed questions; and it was divided into two parts. Part one was a set of personal factual questions asking for demographic information on the focus group participants. Part two related to inquiries into their news media consumption and their routines in accessing Pantip website, including their reasons for using their pseudonym and image to represent themselves. It was expected that the response would reveal greater dimensions of the identity of Pantip users. The participant consent form and pre-group questionnaire are fully presented in Appendix A and B of this thesis.

When everyone in the group had returned a completed questionnaire to the researcher, the focus group began. The session started with the researcher’s explanation of the practices in conversation; that only one person should talk at a time; there were no right or wrong answers; everyone should participate in all the questions; any ideas as well as opinions from anyone were important; and the real names of respondents would be used, since confidentiality was strictly preserved. In addition, the conversation in the group would be recorded, but this would be used only for transcription. During the focus groups, the researcher acted as moderator, because analytical skills, insight into the project and an ability to probe for further information were needed. This role gave the researcher the opportunity to follow up on interesting points, to clear up confusing answers, and to encourage respondents to share

their viewpoints, in the way that Krueger and Casey (2009, p. 2) and Wimmer and Dominick (2006, p. 130) suggest.

The post-focus group referred to the process of data analysis and interpretation. For questionnaires, the data was tabulated by applying simple percentage and arithmetical totals. For the focus group discussions, the voice recordings of each group were transcribed into text. The process of handling the text relied on the 4Cs method that is offered by Savin-Baden and Major (2013). Firstly, the meaningful segments of text were 'cut' and set apart for close examination. Then, the data set or incidents that stood out were 'coded' and 'categorised' to structure their generic relationships. Finally, the dominant ideas were unified and 'converted' into themes for interpretation. Thematic analysis was used here to identify, analyse and report patterns in the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). To put it another way, the value position and identity, aim and action, posting practices, online ethics and netiquette, skills and knowledge, as well as media usage and the perspective of Pantip's users were revealed. The findings from the focus group participants are explained thoroughly in Chapter Six of the thesis.

4.3 PART 3: INTERVIEWS

Those of us who aim to understand and document others' understandings choose qualitative interviewing because it provides us with a means for exploring the points of view of our research subjects, while granting these points of view the culturally honoured status of reality.

(Miller and Glassner, 1997, p. 100)

The qualitative interview is the third method used in this study in order to examine the impact of content in the Internet forum on the mainstream news media. In other words, it aims to show the extent to which ordinary people play a role in national news media, and how professional journalists respond to the wave of participatory journalism in Thailand. Furthermore, it is also to deliver the answers to research questions:

5: To what extent do journalists in the mainstream news media pay attention to information in the Internet forum?

6: How do the users' practices in the Internet forum challenge the journalistic practices of the mainstream news media?

7: To what extent do journalists in mainstream news media accept the Internet forum's users as their helpers in news reporting?

As far as the types of interviews are concerned, semi-structured interviews were employed in the research. Some scholars use the term differently, for example, the "semi-standardized interview" (Berg, 2004). However, it is the process from which the key words, phrases, and ideas of the speakers were picked up for research

(Rubin and Rubin, cited in Berg, *ibid.*, p. 97) by using predetermined questions set in a systematic and consistent order, but digression is allowed (Berg, *ibid.*, p. 81). Moreover, the interviewer is permitted to probe and to seek for both clarification and elaboration beyond the answers given, and also to enter into a dialogue with the interviewees (May, 2001, p. 123). The interviewees in this study are professional journalists working in various news agencies in Thailand. As Lindlof and Taylor (2011, p. 200) discovered, the semi-structured interview is therefore considered to be the appropriate method for the informants, whose experience and expertise vary widely. The interview guide, with essential questions, was prepared in advance. However, for a more flexible approach with different news professionals, the researcher simply dropped, improvised, or added optional questions, while the interview was conducted. The interview guide is outlined below:

Research question 5: To what extent do journalists in the mainstream news media pay attention to information in the Internet fora?	
Essential questions in interviews	Theme explored in interviews
1. What are the main differences in your work before and since the widespread use of the Internet in Thailand? 2. How does Pantip play a role for you? 3. What types of information do you pay special attention to in Pantip? (For example, images, video clips, opinions, and criticism) 5. How do you react to that information?	The impacts of news participation in the Internet forum on reporters.

Research question 6: How do the users' practices in the Internet forum challenge the journalistic practices of the mainstream news media?	
Essential questions in interviews	Theme explored in interviews
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why do you have to use the information from Pantip? 2. What are the factors which have made Pantip becomes one of the main sources of information? 3. How are your journalistic practices transformed following the emerging role of participatory journalism in Pantip? 4. Do you have to be more circumspect in news reporting? In what way? 	The impacts of news participation in the Internet forum on the procedures of news reporting.

Research question 7: To what extent do journalists in mainstream news media accept the Internet forum users as their helpers in news reporting?	
Essential questions in interviews	Theme explored in interviews
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the limitations of your work? 2. What are the benefits of Pantip for your work? 3. Is Pantip your helper? Why do you think so? 4. What are Pantip users supposed to do in order to improve their ability in supporting journalistic works? 	The tentative role of news participation in the Internet forum in supporting mainstream news reporting.

Recruiting and selecting respondents

It was mentioned earlier that focus group participants were required to complete a written questionnaire before entering the group. One of the inquiries in the questionnaire was “*What are the top-three news media from which you commonly take news to post on Pantip?*” The answers showed a wide variety of national newspaper names, news programmes on television, and news websites. The researcher applied these answers as a starting point for recruiting journalists. They were categorised and, then, the researcher simply conducted content analysis to pick up the top-ten results from the list (see Chapter Six on page 225 for this list). As a result, ten news agencies were selected. The box below illustrates the outcome.

Print	Television	Website
	<u>News Programme in these organisations:</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thairath• Matichon• Daily News	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nation Broadcasting Corporation Public Co., Ltd.• The Bangkok Entertainment Co., Ltd. (TV Channel 3)• Thai News Network 24, True Visions Public Co., Ltd.• Thai Public Broadcasting Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• www.thairath.co.th• www.matichon.co.th• www.siamrath.co.th

The researcher sent formal letters to the Chief Executive Officer of these ten news agencies. The information in the letter included:

- An explanation of the purpose of the research;
- The process of the sample selection;
- The format and length of the interview, as well as the use of an audio recorder;
- The arrangements for the place of the interview;
- The request for the assignment of the journalists volunteering to participate in the interview; and
- The option for confidentiality and anonymity.

After a week the responses were received with the names of the respondents, their position in the organisation and their contact details. The researcher managed the pre-interview contact in late April, 2013, by telephoning all of the journalists to explain the purpose of the study and to establish rapport, as well as to arrange the meetings for the interviews, which took place in May, 2013. The researcher himself was the interviewer, because the interviewer must react rapidly and with sensitivity to the conversation in the interview, as Rapley (2001) describes it as “here-and-now interaction event in which [the] data are collected in and through talk-in-interaction” (p. 310). Table 4.3 is the list of the interviewees who also gave permission to quote from their statements and to reveal their real names in the thesis. There are twenty-four of them altogether, composed of senior and young news professionals.

Table 4.5 Lists of interview participants

No	Name of interviewees	Position	News organisation
1	Mr Prakit Limsakul	Columnist	Thairath
2	Mr Pramed Lekpetch	Political Reporter	Thairath
3	Mr Chavarong Limpattamapanee	Online Newspaper Editor-in-chief	Thairath Online www.thairath.co.th
4	Ms Supattra Painak	Social Reporter	Matichon
5	Mr Jaturong Pathumarnont	Political Chief Reporter	Matichon
6	Mr Narit Sektheera	Editor-in-chief	Matichon
7	Ms Pentip Aksornneam	Assistant to Economics Chief Reporter	Matichon
8	Mr Teeradet Aiemsamran	Online Newspaper Editor	Matichon Online www.matichon.co.th
9	Mr Kaset Noitip	Assistant to Online Newspaper Editor	Matichon Online www.matichon.co.th
10	Mr Kreangkrai Buasri	Crime Chief Reporter	Daily News
11	Mr Prapong Lamejang	Crime Reporter	Daily News
12	Mr Chai Patacamin	Managing Editor	Daily News
13	Mr Phaithoon Srihong	Online Newspaper Editor	Siamrath Online www.siamrath.co.th
14	Ms Wannasiri Sirivarna	TV News Presenter	Nation Broadcasting Corporation Public Co., Ltd. (NBC)
15	Mr Pawat Puangyeetho	Talk Programmes Producer	Nation Broadcasting Corporation Public Co., Ltd. (NBC)

Table 4.5 Lists of interview participants (continued)

No	Name of interviewees	Position	News Media
16	Mr Sumran Chatto	Executive Vice President and Manager of News Department	The Bangkok Entertainment Co., Ltd. (TV Channel 3)
17	Mrs Benjawan Wongwilai	Editor of Special Reports	The Bangkok Entertainment Co., Ltd. (TV Channel 3)
18	Mr Apisak Dhanasettakorn	Deputy Director of News Department	Thai News Network 24 (TNN 24)
19	Mr Phollapruet RuangCharas	News Programmes Editor-in-chief	Thai News Network 24 (TNN 24)
20	Ms Suwimon Jinamoon	Special Reports Correspondent	Thai News Network 24 (TNN 24)
21	Ms Pannee Rungsawang	Editor of Art and Culture News Programmes	Thai Public Broadcasting Service (ThaiPBS)
22	Mr Athip Klinwijit	Assistant to Editor of Art and Culture News Programmes	Thai Public Broadcasting Service (ThaiPBS)
23	Mr Amphai Phochairat	Editor of Sport News Programmes	Thai Public Broadcasting Service (ThaiPBS)
24	Mr Viriya Tunnukolkrit	Sport Correspondent	Thai Public Broadcasting Service (ThaiPBS)

Data analysis and ensuring the credibility of the data

Although the researcher wrote a brief summary of what each journalist had said in the interviews, a professional transcriber was hired to transcribe the audio records into a full text. This not only saved a great deal of time, but the researcher can also scan the comments of the interviewees and categorise them into the appropriate category. Then, the content analysis was a method applied to analyse the data. This method was chosen because it is suitable for “the description of the manifest content of communication” (Berelson, 1952, p. 18), for “the reading of text, the use of text within a social context, and the analysis of text” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 19), and to count the occurrences of specified characteristics or dimensions of the texts and to identify the social significance and representations in such texts (Hansen *et al.*, 1998, p. 95). It is expected that the result will reveal the impacts of news participation on the Internet forum, on the reporters themselves, and on the procedures of news reporting. Moreover, the tentative role of Pantip users in supporting mainstream news reporters could be found.

As far as the credibility of data is concerned, the statements quoted in the thesis, the interpretation of data, and the summary of the findings were sent to all interview participants by electronic mail. This also relates to the principled action of the study because journalists had the opportunity to check and remove any statement that they considered inappropriate for inclusion in thesis. Within a week after sending the mails, all of the journalists had replied and confirmed the accuracy of the information. It is worth noting here the argument of Nunkoosing (2005), who highlights the interaction between the researcher and the participants. He argues that, viewed from

this perspective, this interaction creates stories that are ‘authentic rather than true’. Although participants would appear to be ‘economical with the truth’, the story they tell may explain how they perceive and react to the incidents (p. 701). The relationship between researcher and participants can therefore be linked to the credibility of the data.

In conclusion, this research employs three methodologies to investigate a Thai Internet forum in terms of its content, its content creators, and the impact of that content. As each different method has its own unique characteristics for research findings, discourse analysis was selected as the first method for this study, which aims to examine the content in the conversation threads and to discover what the natures of power in the forum are. Eighteen fora from the ‘News Talk’ category in Pantip were the research samples. Then, eighteen forum users who had posted that coverage of news stories were invited to participate in the second method used in the study. The second method was the focus group, which aims to examine the content creators in regard to their value positions, aim, aspect, media usage and practices. Finally, qualitative interviews were the third method used in the study, in order to explore the impacts of the content in Pantip on mainstream news professionals. Twenty-four journalists working in national newspapers, television news organisations and news websites were invited to face-to-face interviews.

With these three parts of the investigation, that use three different methodologies, the results will show the relationship between the Internet forum and the mainstream news media in Thailand. Pantip, as a platform for public discussion, was investigated not only to find out how it has been used, but also the discourse in the threads produced

by its users was explored to discover the role it plays in Thai society. If the elements of communication processes; the senders, receivers, medium, message and its feedback, are concerned, then, this research covers all these elements. The growth of the Internet and the rapid development of new media in the past decade have changed Thai society and added some new possibilities to traditional media. The three chapters that follow will present the results of the study.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS OF THE DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the results obtained from the discourse analysis which is the method used in the research in order to examine content in Pantip. It would be seen in the following pages that different formats of content were inserted by Pantip users into the threads; including text, image, and video clip. These formats presented their own information, or were used to support each others' details. In addition, hyperlinks and emoticons were also applied. However, this study focuses on the opinion of comment writers who reacted to the topic in thread. Comments that received the greatest number of "satisfied" emoticons from forum members in the selected threads are taken to analyse the discourse. Initially, as already mentioned in the methodology chapter, there were eighteen topics from eighteen thread starters in Pantip were successfully recruited. However, only fifteen comments from fifteen topics were practicable. Three threads were excluded because none of their comments showed forum members' satisfaction.

Each original message, in other words the coverage of the story posted at the beginning of these threads, will be first summarised briefly. Then, its most satisfied comment will be fully translated from Thai into English. Finally, the analysis of the discursive practices, intertextuality, and socio-cultural practices of the comment will be followed. Moreover, findings from the analytical framework of all of the comments will be combined and explained thoroughly at the end of this chapter in order to deliver an intelligible answer for research question one: *How do users manipulate their power in the Internet forum?*

5.1 Analysis 1: Original message created by *Anemone2526*
Source: <http://pantip.com/topic/30095794>

นร.เฮ!! "สพฐ." สั่งปฏิรูปหลักสูตรการศึกษา ให้ครูลด "งาน-การบ้าน" เริ่มเปิดเทอม พ.ค.นี้

การเรียนรู้ การศึกษา กระชัว

จากมติชนออนไลน์

เมื่อวันที่ 29 มกราคม นายชินภัทร ภูมิรัตน เลขาธิการคณะกรรมการการศึกษาขั้นพื้นฐาน (กพฐ.) เปิดเผยภายหลังการประชุมผู้บริหารสำนักงานคณะกรรมการการศึกษาขั้นพื้นฐาน (สพฐ.) ว่า ที่ประชุมได้หารือเรื่องการปฏิรูปหลักสูตรแกนกลางการศึกษาขั้นพื้นฐาน พ.ศ. 2544 ฉบับปรับปรุง พ.ศ. 2551 ตามนโยบายของนายพงศ์เทพ เทพกาญจนา รัฐมนตรีว่าการกระทรวงศึกษาธิการ (ศธ.) โดยจะดำเนินการใน 2 ระยะ ได้แก่ 1. ระยะเร่งด่วน จะดำเนินการให้ทันเปิดภาคเรียนที่ 1 ปีการศึกษา 2556 ในเดือนพฤษภาคม ทาง สพฐ. จะเน้นบูรณาการทั้งเนื้อหา เวลาเรียน การวัดและประเมินผล ตลอดจนการบ้านที่ต้องมีการบูรณาการทุกกลุ่มสาระวิชา และจะต้องลดภาระงานของนักเรียนด้วย เพราะที่ผ่านมาพบว่าเด็กไทยต้องทำการบ้านเยอะมาก ทำให้เด็กเกิดความเครียด

"ตั้งแต่ภาคเรียนที่ 1 ปีการศึกษา 2556 เป็นต้นไป เด็กไทยทุกคนในทุกระดับชั้นในโรงเรียนสังกัด สพฐ. จะมีภาระการเรียนในห้องเรียนลดน้อยลง และจะมีโอกาสเรียนรู้ รวมถึงทำกิจกรรมนอกห้องเรียนมากขึ้น ส่วนการบ้านและโครงการที่ครูมอบให้ก็จะมีบูรณาการในทุกกลุ่มสาระวิชาเข้าด้วยกัน ฉะนั้นตั้งแต่เปิดเทอมหน้าเดือนพฤษภาคมนี้ งานทุกอย่างของเด็กจะต้องลดลงทั้งหมดรวมถึงการให้การบ้านต้องลดลงด้วย และจะไม่ใช่วิธีการที่ครูจะมีอำนาจเหนือนักเรียน ครูจะสามารถให้การบ้านเด็กได้ตามใจชอบอีกต่อไป ถ้าครูให้การบ้านเด็กจนเกิดความทุกข์ทรมานก็สามารถร้องเรียนมาได้ที่ สพฐ. เพื่อให้เกิดการปรับปรุงต่อไป"

เลขาธิการ กพฐ. กล่าวต่อว่า ส่วนระยะที่ 2 ของการปฏิรูปหลักสูตรนั้น สพฐ. จะจัดประชุมเชิงปฏิบัติการในวันที่ 6-8 กุมภาพันธ์ เพื่อพิจารณาบทวนมาตรฐาน และตัวชี้วัดของหลักสูตรการศึกษาขั้นพื้นฐาน เพื่อให้ผู้ที่เกี่ยวข้องได้วิพากษ์วิจารณ์ว่ามีมาตรฐานการเรียนรู้ และตัวชี้วัดใดบ้างที่มีมากเกินไปจนมีความจำเป็น เพื่อที่จะได้ตัดทอนและปรับปรุงต่อไป

1 + 0 | Anemone2526 30 มกราคม 2556 เวลา 00:50 น.

Summary of this news

The office of the Basic Education Commission of Thailand (OBEC) proclaimed the reformation of the core basic education curriculum for the academic year of 2013. One of the findings in the report that the Commission received includes the news that Thai students are very stressed, owing to an overload of homework. The resolution is therefore that teachers must minimise student's assignments in order to allow them to take part in out-of-class activities. The students distressed from this problem can lodge their complaints at the OBEC.

Most satisfying comment in the thread

ความคิดเห็นที่ 22

ถ้าใจมันไม่รักที่จะเรียน การบ้านมากน้อยไม่ใช่ประเด็น มากแล้วถ้าไม่ทำหรือหาวิธีลอกทุกอย่าง น้อยแล้วถ้าเอาเวลาที่ว่างไปทำเรื่องไร้สาระ หรือไม่ก็ขยันตัวนอกเวลาเพื่อตอบสนองระบบการประเมินของส่วนกลางที่คอยย้ำความไม่เอาไหนของครูในระบบ

ตรงข้ามถ้านักเรียนรักเรียน เป็นสุขสนุกที่จะเรียน การชวนเขาใจใส่ก็จะตามมาเองโดยไม่ต้องให้มากำกับว่าทำการบ้านเท่าไรเท่าไร การประเมินก็จะไปในลักษณะผ่อนปรน เน้นเฉพาะที่นักเรียนแต่ละคนสนใจใคร่รู้ เรียนร้อยจำได้ใช้เป็นส่วนใหญ่ ไม่ใช่เรียนร้อยเข้าหัวแต่ลืมที่เหลืลิมเกลี้ยงเมื่อสอบเสร็จ หรือไม่ก็จำไม่ได้สักอย่างเพราะไม่อยากจำ

สรุปง่ายๆ คือ

ตรงไหนที่ระบบการศึกษาไทยยังไม่เน้นปลูกฝังความรักที่จะเรียน และทักษะในการเรียนรู้ด้วยการพึ่งตนเอง (autonomous learning) ให้แก่นักเรียน และไม่ปรับระบบการประเมินที่เน้นแค่ปริมาณข้อสอบกันดูลีลาหลอกลวงแบบนี้ ก็จะไม่มีการพัฒนาคนในชาติให้มีปัญญาพัฒนาตัวพัฒนาชาติด้วยนั่นเอง

เข้าทำนองยิ่งเรียนยิ่งโง่ เรียนน้อยก็ยิ่งโง่ไม่ต่างกันอย่างทุกวันนี้ เพราะสาระที่เรียนมันไม่มีคุณภาพ ไม่ตอบโจทย์ในการพัฒนาคน สูญเปล่าสิ้นเชิงอยู่นั่นเอง ไม่มีทางออกอยู่นั่นเอง

0 + 6 | joechow 🤔 30 มกราคม 2556 เวลา 11:32 น. [ตอบกลับ](#)

เกียรตินำ ถูกใจ, Mr.Learning ถูกใจ, noneasy2go ถูกใจ, genf ถูกใจ, JIngJeez ถูกใจ, desmothenes ถูกใจ

Full translation of this comment

If there is no heart to learn, much or less homework is not the point. What if there is much homework, but they don't care or just copy it somewhere? What if they get less? But spend their free time on a nonsensical matter or bone up on an extra tutorial class in order to be successful in the National Assessment System, which magnifies good-for-nothing teachers in school.

Conversely, if students feel happy and enjoy learning, then their keen interest will come up beyond doing homework, no matter what the quantity is. Learning assessment will also be in compromising style; focusing only on what individual is eager to learn, to engage, to absorb most, not just a handful of knowledge which is forgotten after exam, or nothing can be recalled because of their carelessness.

To sum up,

As long as the Thai education pays no heed to cultivating the attentiveness and skills in autonomous learning in the student's heart and to adjusting the assessment system, focusing only on the volume of exam papers, there is no way to develop people to have their own intellects, to develop themselves and the nation, definitely.

Similarly to what has been said, the more the students learn, the more stupid they are. It is because the essence of learning lacks quality and fails to respond the process of human development; it is worth nothing and has no solution at all.

Framework for the analysis of the discourse in this comment

This comment, which emerged at the twenty-second position in the thread, was posted by a Pantip user under the pseudonym of *Joechou*. It was found to be satisfying by another six forum members as a result of the criticism of the Thai education system.

The analysis of *Joechou*'s discourse is presented in the table below.

Discursive practices Intertextuality and socio-cultural practices	Is there the reproduction of a power relationship?	Is there the restructuring of a power relationship?	Is there the challenging of hegemony?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the macro level?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the micro level?
Economic context	-	-	-	-	-
Political context	-	-	-	-	-
Cultural context Thai students tend to value the extra tutorial classes outside the school over those provided by their teachers in normal studying period. This results from the deficiency of educational system and teaching quality.	-	-	Reducing load of homework is irrelevant to the education reform but indeed the teaching standard.	-	Phrase “ <i>which magnifies good-for-nothing teachers in school</i> ” shows that Joechou is complaining on Thai teachers about their method of teaching and learning assessment.
Belief / Individual attitude (1) Thai education system has to be reformed. (2) Enthusiasm and skills in autonomous learning have to be cultivated in the school curriculum as they are important for human and nation development.	-	-	Joechou believed that if teachers do their jobs efficiently, then students will be joyful in the classroom and can recollect well on what they have learnt.	-	Phrase “ <i>the more the students learn, the more stupid they are</i> ” is widely known as irony in the Thai context in terms of unsuccessful schooling.

- 5.2 Analysis 2: Original message created by *Southern Guy* (หนุ่มเมืองใต้)
Source: <http://2g.pantip.com/cafe/news/topic/NE13029815/NE13029815.html>

ผวจ.สุราษฎร์ฯ ประกาศให้ "สมุย-พะงัน" เป็นพื้นที่ภัยพิบัติฉุกเฉิน

หลังจากลงพื้นที่ติดตามสถานการณ์การซ่อมแซมสายเคเบิลไฟฟ้าใต้ดินของการไฟฟ้าส่วนภูมิภาค ที่ อ.เกาะสมุย จ.สุราษฎร์ธานี ที่คาดว่าจะเริ่มจ่ายไฟฟ้าได้ตั้งแต่ช่วงเที่ยงที่ผ่านมา แต่จนถึงขณะนี้ยังไม่สามารถจ่ายไฟฟ้าได้ ทำให้ชาวบ้านและนักท่องเที่ยวได้รับความเดือดร้อนติดต่อกันเป็นวันที่ 3

อย่างไรก็ตาม การไฟฟ้า ยืนยันว่าจะซ่อมแซมสายเคเบิลใต้ดินที่ระเบิด แล้วเสร็จภายในวันนี้ ขณะที่ผู้ว่าราชการจังหวัดสุราษฎร์ธานี ได้ประชุมหน่วยงานที่เกี่ยวข้อง ทั้งของ อ.เกาะสมุย และเกาะพะงัน โดยประกาศให้พื้นที่ทั้ง 2 เกาะ เป็นพื้นที่ประสบภัยพิบัติฉุกเฉิน เพื่อขานงบประมาณ 50 ล้านบาท มาช่วยเหลือผู้ได้รับผลกระทบ

เบื้องต้นสมาคมส่งเสริมการท่องเที่ยวเกาะสมุย ระบุว่า นักท่องเที่ยวได้เดินทางออกจากเกาะอย่างต่อเนื่อง มูลค่าความเสียหายไม่ต่ำกว่า 1,000 ล้านบาท

ที่มา <http://astv.mobi/AI6Y1yg>
ภาพ http://www.samui-center.com/SamuiForum/images_upload_answer/2009322244571.jpg



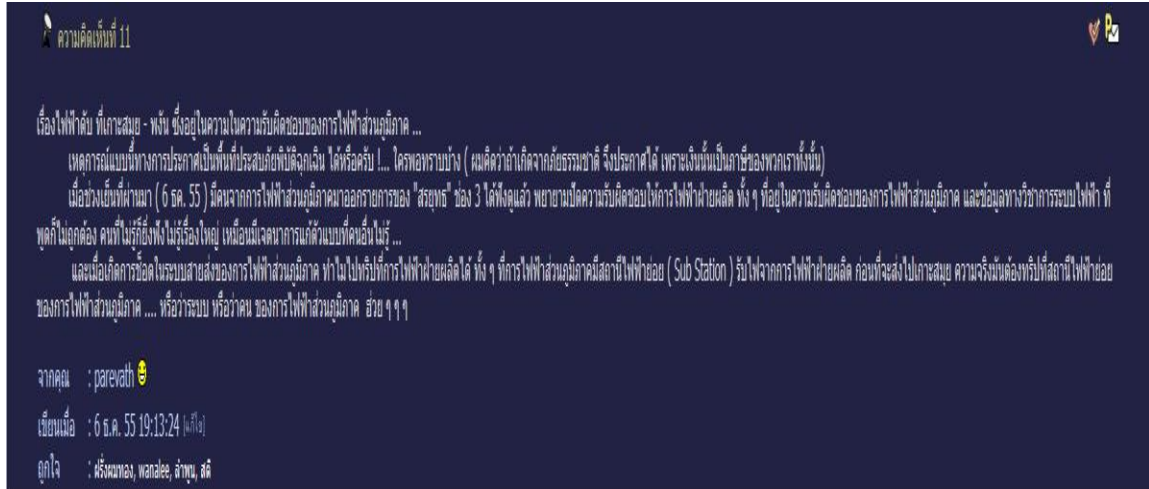
จากคุณ : หนุ่มเมืองใต้ ☹️ Ploxx 816
เขียนเมื่อ : 6 ธ.ค. 55 14:58:28 (น.เ็ง)

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Summary of this news

Because of an underground cable explosion at Samui, the entire island lost electrical power for three days until today. The Suratthani Governor declares that Samui is in a state of emergency due to natural disaster. This declaration allows him to spend 50 million baht (approximately one million pounds) from County budgets to help the locals and tourists who were affected by this blackout.

Most satisfying comment in the thread



Full translation of this comment

Of the power cut at Samui and Pha-ngan Islands where it is under the responsibility of the Provincial Electricity Authority (PEA). . .

Such incident, could the government declare a state of emergency!?.... Whoever could let me know? (I think it could be declared whether a natural disaster truly caused the problem, because all the money spent is from our tax.)

Yesterday evening (6 Dec. 12), there was a guy from PEA joining news talk programme on TV Channel 3, hosted by “Sorayuth.” It seemed to me that he was trying to pass the buck to the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT), though it was his responsibility. Academic data that he mentioned were also not correct. Audiences who know nothing about it became even clueless. It’s just like he intended to explain this in a misleading way....

And when there is a short circuit in PEA’s cable system, why should it trip at EGAT? PEA has a substation to receive electrical power from EGAT before redirecting it to Samui Island; as a matter of fact, it must have been tripped at PEA’s substation.... Or are the system or staff of PEA so sucky?

Framework for the analysis of the discourse in this comment

This comment sits in eleventh position in the thread and satisfies four forum members.

Parevath criticised the way in which local authorities had handled a prolonged power outage in one of the most famous islands in southern Thailand. The analysis of *Parevath*'s discourse is presented in the table below.

Discursive practices Intertextuality and socio-cultural practices	Is there the reproduction of a power relationship?	Is there the restructuring of a power relationship?	Is there the challenging of hegemony?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the macro level?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the micro level?
Economic context Citizens pay tax and tax becomes state revenue.	-	-	Parevath thought that the natural disaster was not a cause of the power cut in this news but, in fact, it was a technical error. Governor misconceived the situation and was prone to spending state revenue unreasonably.	-	Question sentence in the third line of comment intended to evoke the readers' thought rather than seeking for answers.
Political context	-	-	-	-	-
Cultural context	-	-	-	-	-
Belief / Individual attitude Provincial Electricity Authority fails to resolve a problem at hand and also fails to present an organisational effectiveness to the public.	-	-	-	-	Critical remarks include "(1) trying to pass the buck, (2) intending to explain in a misleading way, and (3) being sucky."

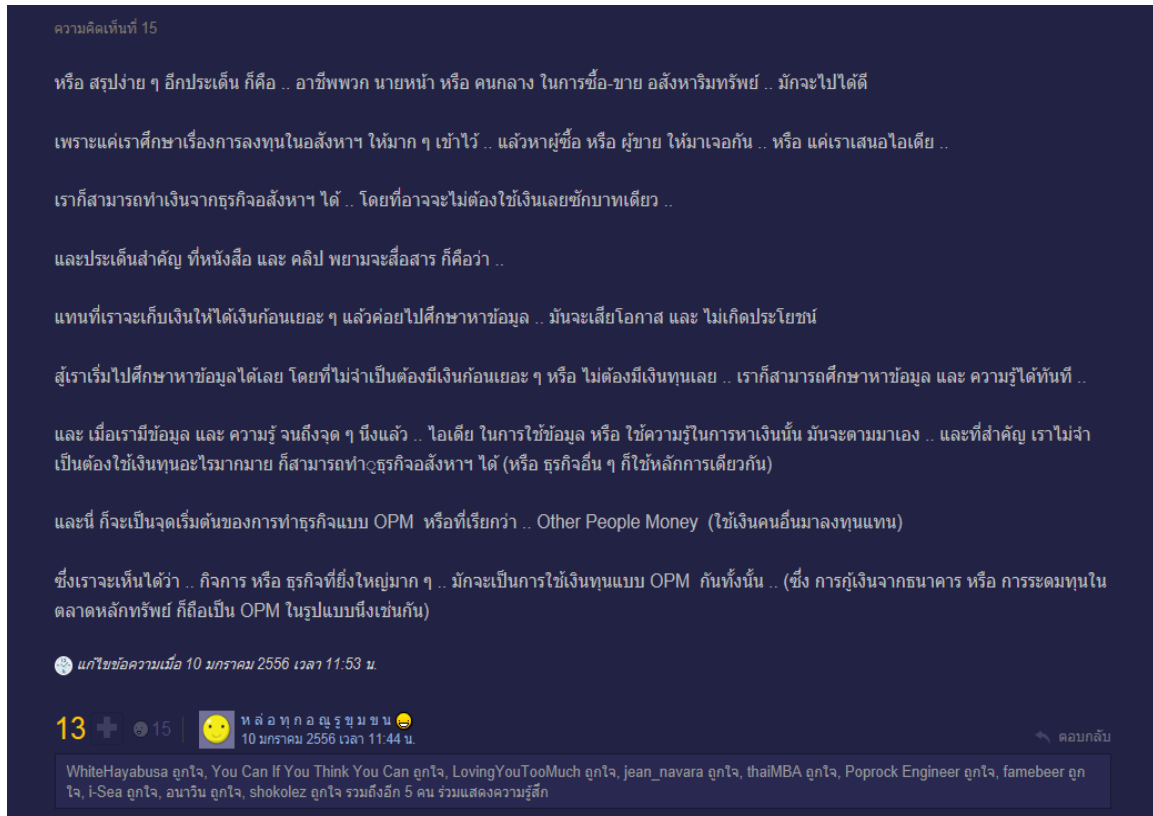
- 5.3 Analysis 3: Original message created by *Oriental Skyline* (ชอบฟ้าบุรพา)
 Source: <http://pantip.com/topic/30030893>



Summary of this news

A video clip posted today is of the interviewing Mr. Phichai Jawala, the author of a book *Getting rich through real estate without using money*. Let's see if it is true and how interesting the investment in the real estate business is.

Most satisfying comment in the thread



Full translation of this comment

Or, briefly, middleman or real estate broker tends to be the occupations that make us rich.

Because we just gather information on real estate investment, more and more..., then arrange a meeting for buyers and sellers...or we just propose the ideas.

So we can make money from this business without spending a penny.

And important point, which this book and clip are trying to communicate, is that. . .

Instead of collecting a large amount of capital before searching for knowledge, which is worthless and missing out...

We should start finding out information, regardless of big money or any fund...

we can search for knowledge right away.

And when we have enough information, the idea of using such information to make money will come out....and, importantly, we have no need to spend any money to do real estate business (or any other business with this principle).

And this is the beginning of doing OPM business, or what it is called Other People's Money (using the money of others instead of ours).

We can see that... a really big business or company ...normally uses OPM funds.... (Loans from banks or fundraising through the stock market are counted as a type of OPM too).

Framework for the analysis of the discourse in this comment

This fifteenth comment in the thread received satisfied emoticons from thirteen forum members. It was posted by a Pantip user under the Thai pseudonym of หล่อทุกอณูรูเมน (Handsome through all parts of body particles) who made a summary of the talk in the video clip attached to the original message and also provided an additional view on how to invest successfully. The analysis of this discourse is presented in the table below.

Discursive practices Intertextuality and socio-cultural practices	Is there the reproduction of a power relationship?	Is there the restructuring of a power relationship?	Is there the challenging of hegemony?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the macro level?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the micro level?
Economic context	-	-	-	-	-
Political context	-	-	-	-	-
Cultural context	-	-	-	-	-
Belief / Individual attitude In order to gain achievement in real estate investment, the cumulative collection of knowledge is more important than collecting the capital.	-	-	-	-	Point in this comment consists of expressing propositional attitudes of the speaker about a state of affairs. According to primitive illocutionary force, this point is “Expressive” when all conditions of speech sound neutral.

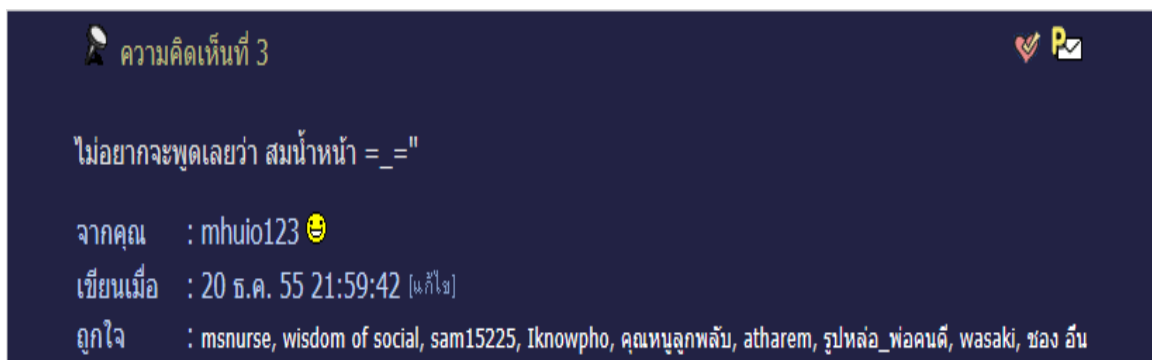
5.4 Analysis 4: Original message created by *So Magawn*
Source: <http://2g.pantip.com/cafe/mbk/topic/T13093114/T13093114.html>

[illegible]

Summary of this news

The fourth floor of the *Mahboonkrong* Department Store, which is deemed to be one of the important trading hubs selling mobile phones and other smart devices in Bangkok, is in continuous recession. This is caused by the decrease in customers' purchasing power due to a severe flood last year and the shopkeepers' demand for a high selling rate for newly arrival products. Moreover, the customers have more choices because, currently, there is an increase in the number of shops for high-tech communication devices.

Most satisfying comment in the thread



Full translation of this comment

I do not want to say that it serves you right. =_="

Framework for the analysis of the discourse in this comment

Mhuio123 is the pseudonym of a Pantip user whose comment is in the third position in thread and that gets satisfaction from nine forum members. *Mhuio123*'s comment is short and it ends with a text-based emoticon showing closed eyes and dropping sweat. This facial expression represents shame, or a writer's mood of boredom and despair. The analysis of this discourse is presented in the table below.

Discursive practices Intertextuality and socio-cultural practices	Is there the reproduction of a power relationship?	Is there the restructuring of a power relationship?	Is there the challenging of hegemony?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the macro level?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the micro level?
Economic context	-	-	-	-	-
Political context	-	-	-	-	-
Cultural context Some forum members in this thread reveal their experiences in dealing with shops and sellers who take advantage of customers. It would seem that the writer of this comment also had an unpleasant experience with shops in this department store.	-	-	-	-	The use of the emoticon showing shame, or <i>Mhuio123</i> 's mood of boredom and despair; after the phrase " <i>serves you right.</i> "
Belief / Individual attitude Integrity is a necessity in trading.	Customers have the right to make a complaint and to show reactions to a product and /or service.	-	-	-	In the Thai context, " <i>It serves you right</i> " is often used sarcastically when someone does something wrong and deserves such results.

5.5 Analysis 5: Original message created by *Birdeyview*
Source: <http://2g.pantip.com/cafe/social/topic/U13064991/U13064991.html>

📢 ไอ้ลอก 5 ตำรวจ สก.ฉวน ขนยาบ้า 1 ล้านเม็ด.... เดลินิวส์

<http://www.dailynews.co.th/thailand/172345>

ไอ้ลอก 5 ตำรวจ สก.ฉวน ขนยาบ้า 1 ล้านเม็ด
วันศุกร์ที่ 14 ธันวาคม 2555 เวลา 12:18 น.
ภาค 5 สิ่งไอ้ลอก 5 ตำรวจ สก.ฉวน จ.น่าน ออกจากรายการ หลังใช้รถตราโลโก้ขนยาบ้า 1 ล้านเม็ด

เมื่อเวลา 09.00 น.วันที่ (14 ธ.ค.) พล.ต.ต.ชำนาญ รวดเร็ว รองผบช.ภ.5 ได้เรียกประชุมเจ้าหน้าที่ตำรวจชุดปราบปรามยาเสพติดภาค 5 พร้อมหัวหน้าด่านตรวจทุกพื้นที่ในเขตรับผิดชอบตำรวจภาค 5 พร้อมกำชับให้ด่านตรวจทุกด่านทำการตรวจค้นเข้มงวด หากมีร่องรอยการลักลอบขนยาเสพติดให้รีบแจ้งตำรวจ ทหาร ที่ขึ้นผ่านด่านต้องตรวจเข้มเหมือนรถประชาชนทั่วไป

พล.ต.ท.ชำนาญ กล่าวไว้เมื่อวันที่ (13 ธ.ค.) เวลา 17.00 น.เจ้าหน้าที่ตำรวจชุด บข.ปส. ได้เข้าปิดล้อมบริเวณลานจอดรถโรงแรมริเวอร์วิว เฟลส ถนนอุททอง ต.หอรัตนไชย อ.พระนครศรีอยุธยา จ.พระนครศรีอยุธยา จับกุมตัวนายร้อย สก.ฉวน จ.น่าน และรถกระบะโตโยต้าไว้ใกล้ตัว จอดอยู่ในรถพบบยาบ้า 1,000,000 เม็ดชุดซ่อนอยู่ และจึงควบคุมตัว พ.ต.ท.ธรรมบุญ นาคบัว สว.สก.ฉวน เป็นหัวหน้าสถานี สก.ฉวน นักเรียนนายร้อย ตำรวจรุ่น 49 ร.ด.จิตติพงษ์ โลโซ รองสว.ป. ด.ด.นลวิช พรรยา ผบ.พนักงานป้องกันปราบปราม ด.ด.อรุณพล คำแสน ผบ.พนักงานป้องกันปราบปราม ด.ด.สิริพงษ์ เขียวพุ่ม ผบ.พนักงานป้องกันปราบปราม ซึ่งทั้งหมดถูกจับกุมหลังลักลอบขนยาเสพติดจำนวนดังกล่าว มาจากเขาเขาค้อตุง จังหวัดเชียงราย โดยได้รับคำสั่งในการขนยาจำนวน 2,000,000 บาท ซึ่งทั้งหมดให้การรับสารภาพว่าได้รับคำสั่งจากพ่อค้ายาเสพติดให้ไปรถตราโลโก้ของเจ้าหน้าที่ตำรวจมายาล้อดขึ้น เพื่อนำผ่านด่านตรวจต่างๆและนำส่งให้ลูกค้าที่บริเวณลานจอดรถโรงแรมริเวอร์วิว แห่งนี้ แต่ทางการข่าวของตำรวจชุด บข.ปส.สืบทราบก่อนและทำการจับกุมตัวไว้ได้ เพราะตามประวัติเดิมของ ร.ด.จิตติพงษ์ นั้นมีประวัติพันกับกลุ่มพ่อค้ายาเสพติดในพื้นที่จังหวัดเชียงใหม่สมัยเป็นตำรวจ ดยด. และเพิ่งได้ย้ายมาสังกัดตำรวจ สก.ฉวน ไม่นานมาที่ก็ักขยานให้หัวหน้าโรงพักและลูกน้อง รวมกันขนยาเสพติดดังกล่าว ซึ่งตอนนี้กำลังอยู่ในระหว่างการขยายผลถึงเครือข่ายที่เกี่ยวข้องเพราะเท่าที่ทราบยาเสพติดนี้ถูกนำเข้ามาจำนวน 2,000,000 เม็ด ส่วนจะมีใครร่วมขบวนการหรือเกี่ยวข้องอีกหรือไม่ต้องรอการขยายผลก่อน

รองผบช.ภ.5 กล่าวต่อไปอีกว่าตอนนี้ได้มีคำสั่งถึงผบ.ภ.จ.ว.น่าน ให้เจ้าหน้าที่ตำรวจทั้ง 5 นายออกจากรายการทันที และตั้งคณะกรรมการสอบสวนตั้งแต่ผู้บังคับบัญชา รวมถึงตัวตำรวจทั้ง 5 คนมีการดำเนินการทั้งทางวินัยและอาญาอย่างร้ายแรง ซึ่งหลังจากเกิดเหตุการณ์เช่นนี้ก็พอทราบแล้วว่ากลุ่มขนยาเสพติดจากภาคเหนือไปสู่ภาคกลางตอนใต้ทั้งหมดมีสี่คนแน่นอน และใช้รถราชการในการขนเนื่องจากเงินในการจ้างขนมีมูลค่าสูง ตำรวจพวกนี้จึงออกนอกกลุ่มออกทาง ซึ่งตอนนี้ได้มีคำสั่งส่วนให้ทุกด่านตรวจให้เข้มงวดตลอด 24 ชั่วโมงไม่ว่าจะเป็นรถตำรวจระดับไหน ยศสูงแค่ไหน หรือรถโรงพักแต่ละแห่งที่ขึ้นผ่านด่านตรวจ เจ้าหน้าที่ประจำด่านทุกคน ต้องตรวจสอบอย่างละเอียดไม่ให้มีการลักลอบขนยาเสพติดได้ และได้มีการกำชับให้ตำรวจทุกสถานีตรวจสอบผู้ใดบังคับบัญชาว่ามีผู้ใดเกี่ยวข้องหรือพัวพันกับยาเสพติดหรือไม่ หากมีไม่เข้าติดตามดูแลดำเนินการอย่างเร่งด่วนอย่าให้มีเหตุการณ์ลักษณะเช่นนี้เกิดขึ้นอีก รองผบช.ภ.5 กล่าวในที่สุด..

.....

เมื่อวานขึ้นนี้ เอรอดตำรวจทางหลวง ไปร่วมปล้นเสียค่าไถ่ลาว

วันนี้หัวหน้าโรงพัก ยศ พันตำรวจโท เอรอดตราโลโก้ของโรงพักนั้นแหละ ขนยาบ้าเสียเองเลย

....เหมือนเดิม ตำรวจโจรไม่ได้ทำครั้งแรกแน่ๆ

จากคุณ : birdeyview 🐦 13:04:56
เขียนเมื่อ : 14 ธ.ค. 55 13:54:23 [แก้ไข]

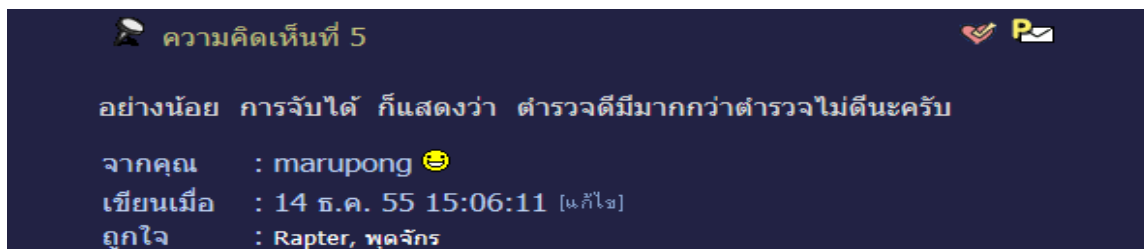
[A999](#) [f](#) [t](#) [b](#) [bookmarks](#) [ตั้งค่าแจ้งเตือน](#) [ส่งอีเมลล์](#) [พิมพ์](#) [หน้าหลัก](#) [กระทู้ยอดนิยม](#) [ประวัติ](#)

Summary of this news

Five policemen from a police station in the Pua District, Nan Province, were arrested by police officers from the Narcotics Suppression Office while they were carrying one million methamphetamine pills in a police car to their customer in Ayutthaya Province. After the incident, the Deputy Police Commander of the Region 5 Police Bureau fired all of these policemen. Moreover, he sent an urgent order to all the narcotics check-points to inspect all vehicles very carefully, even the police cars.

The original message creator, Birdeyevuew, also added his remark at the end of the news story by stating that “.....as usual, wicked policemen.....surely, this was not the first time they had done it.”

Most satisfying comment in the thread



Full translation of this comment

At least the arrest shows that good policemen outnumber bad policemen.

Framework for the analysis of the discourse in this comment

This fifth comment in the thread, which gained a satisfied emoticon from two forum members, was posted by a Pantip user with the pseudonym *Marupong*. It came in just one single sentence, but it connoted a writer’s belief that Thai policemen are not all corrupt. The analysis of this discourse is presented in the table below.

Discursive practices Intertextuality and socio-cultural practices	Is there the reproduction of a power relationship?	Is there the restructuring of a power relationship?	Is there the challenging of hegemony?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the macro level?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the micro level?
Economic context	-	-	-	-	-
Political context	-	-	-	-	-
Cultural context The writer of this comment (Marupong) disagreed with the remark given by the original message creator (Birdeyview) who said <i>“as usual, wicked policemen.”</i> Marupong’s idea clearly challenged Birdeyview’s opinion, but it showed politeness, respectfulness and Marupong’s optimistic character also.	-	-	-	-	(1) Use of word นะครับ (Na Krab) to convey politeness at the end of the sentence. (2) Optimistic sense in comment represents a positive politeness strategy.
Belief / Individual attitude Thai policemen are not all bad, and the good ones are still dependable.	-	-	-	-	-

- 5.6 Analysis 6: Original message created by *My name is OZ* (ผมชื่อ OZ)
Source: <http://pantip.com/topic/30096914>

(กระหู่ข้าว) “ไบเคย”มันใจหุ่นเขี้ยะ ถ่ายชุดว่ายน้ำ โนรีทซ์ พันค่าหวิวเฉียดลัน

สุวิวัน พรสิณ (ไบเคย อาร์สยาม) นักแสดงหญิง แฟชั่น กระหู่ข้าว



ภาพ : IG @baitoey_rsiam

ถือเป็นการแหกกฎวงการทุ่งอีกครั้งหนึ่ง สำหรับนักร้องสาว “ไบเคย อาร์สยาม” ที่ซิมเมอร์นี้จะได้เห็นเธอเป็นแบบชุดว่ายน้ำ ให้กับนิตยสารชั้นนำฉบับหนึ่ง แวะมาว่าคำตัว “สั้นเสมอ” นั้นเกือบ “เสมอลัน” เลยทีเดียว

ได้ข่าวว่าขึ้นแท่นเป็นลูกรักเขี้ยะ

กลัวไหมที่จะรีทซ์เยอะ

“ก็อาจจะบอกว่าของไบเคย ไม่มีรีทซ์เลย พอถ่ายเสร็จจัดทำหนังสือวันนั้นเลยไม่มีการทำรีทซ์อะไรทั้งสิ้น บก เขายังบอกเลยว่า ด้วยตัวเราด้วยที่เราดูแลตัวเองมาดีพอสมควรทุกอย่าง อย่างที่พอถ่ายออกมาเสร็จไม่ต้องมาทำอะไรเลยคะ”

เรียกว่าสวยเพอร์เฟค วังัน

“ไม่คะ คือเราไม่มีส่วนเกิน ส่วนขาดพอเราถ่ายแสงพร้อม ไม่มีปัญหาอะไรเลย มันเลยเป็นใจ ที่จะเห็นเป็นของจริงหมดทุกอย่างคะ ของจริงล้วนๆ รอดสิ้นเดือนกุมภาพันธ์คะ”

เตรียมรับกับกระแสวิพากษ์วิจารณ์บ้าง

“ก็อันนี้ต้องลุ้นเลย อย่างแรกไบเคยว่า หนังสือเขาต้องขายดีแน่นอนคะ แล้วก็ที่สำคัญโดนด่าอยู่แล้วคะ แต่ว่าทั้งนี้ทั้งนั้นไบเคยว่า น่าจะฮอตจริงๆแหละรับหน้ารับจริง ๆคะ ก็อาจจะมียี่ห้อค่ายหลายๆคนที่ได้รับงานถ่ายนะตรงนี้ โฟมด ก็ถ่ายให้กับอีกเล่มหนึ่ง แต่ของเราต้องขายดีแน่นอน อาจจะเพราะภาพที่มันออกมา”

คำตัวเยอะไหม หลักลันเลยหรือเปล่า

“ไม่ถึงคะ หลักแสนคะ ก็เกือบลัน ที่ทำก็ บิลละเล่มคะ ทำได้แค่นี้เพราะว่าเป็นสัญญา ว่าขอแค่บิลละเล่มด้วยทางตัวสินค้าก็กับเราฝ่ายเดียว ก็เลยทำให้คำตัวขึ้น คือความจริงไบเคยทำงานด้วยใจมากกว่าเรื่อง คำตัวเพราะว่ามันก็ไม่ได้ลดหย่อนไปเท่าไร เพราะว่ามันก็ติดต่อมาหลายเล่ม แต่ว่าที่เลือกเล่มนี้เพราะว่ามันทำให้ตัวเราโอเคที่สุด ดีที่สุด แล้วตอนนี้เรตติ้งก็ดีแล้ว อยากให้เท่านี้ไปตลอดคะ”

ที่มา : <http://entertain.smmonline.net/>

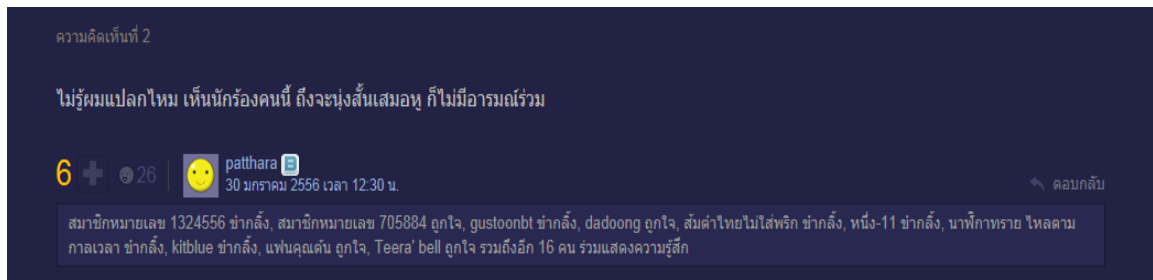
0 + 0 | ตะละแม่ชาห์ริม 30 มกราคม 2556 เวลา 12:26 น.

Note: This topic was posted by Pomchue OZ. However, the pseudonym shown above is his old one, which was changed in March 2013.

Summary of this news

This news is of the interview that a Thai pop-folk singer, who is a household name that has been created by the press, who refer to her as “San Samer Hoo”²¹ for her sexy fashion sense. She became a swimsuit model for a leading magazine and earned almost one million baht (around 20,000 pounds) from this set of photographs.

Most satisfying comment in the thread



Full translation of this comment

Am I odd? When I see this singer in crotch-high shorts, I don't feel any pleasure.

²¹ Or in Thai “สั้นเสมอๆ”, a phrase is a technique of analogy in the Thai language which literally means “ear-high shorts.” However, it actually refers to the “crotch range”, which means that she wears very short shorts that leave little to the imagination.

Framework for the analysis of the discourse in this comment

There were twenty-six forum members who reacted to this comment, and twelve of them felt satisfied with it. The comment sits in the second position in the thread and was posted by a male Pantip user, *Patthara*, who seemed to ridicule the sexy fashion sense and the outspokenness of the pop-folk music singer in the news. The analysis of this discourse is presented in the table below.

Discursive practices Intertextuality and socio-cultural practices	Is there the reproduction of a power relationship?	Is there the restructuring of a power relationship?	Is there the challenging of hegemony?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the macro level?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the micro level?
Economic context	-	-	-	-	-
Political context	-	-	-	-	-
Cultural context	-	-	-	-	-
Belief / Individual attitude It is not always the case that women in sexy dresses have to be sexually attractive.	-	-	The writer of this comment is one of the audience members who have no sensual pleasure from the representation of this singer, although the media continually present and spotlight her sexy look rather than her singing capability.	-	According to the personal pronoun, the writer of the comment is male. He expressed his view humorously and flippantly. However the tone also shows his dislike of the image of this singer.




Source: <http://2g.pantip.com/cafe/social/topic/U13105630/U13105630.html>

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Summary of this news

“The overlapped area” is currently a hot issue in the cyber world as some keyboard hooligans have expressed their opinions seriously on McDonald’s restaurants becoming a tutoring venue for freelance tutors and high-school and university students. Some buy only one set of food or one drink, and they sit at the table for many hours, especially during the peak hours, when there are not enough seats for other customers. Even though there has been a formal notification for co-operation, this is a vain attempt.

Most satisfying comment in the thread

 ความคิดเห็นที่ 3  

เดี๋ยวก่อน

ถ้ามีการติวตัวต่อตัว ทำไมไม่ไปติวที่บ้านเด็กสะดัก

ประเทศญี่ปุ่นเขาก็จ้างติวเตอร์มาสอนที่บ้านเหมือนกัน

ข้อดีมีมากมาย

- 1 เจียบสบ
- 2 สะดวกสบาย ไม่ต้องทนแรงกดดันจากใคร
- 3 อยู่บ้านมีผู้ปกครองอยู่ โอกาสที่มีเหตุร้ายเกิดขึ้นนั้นเป็นไปได้ยาก
- 4 กินอาหาร กินขนมได้ตามสะดวก

แล้วทำไมคนไทยไม่ทำบ้างล่ะ

อีกอย่าง การติวตัวต่อตัวก็ไปติวที่ห้องสมุดก็ได้ หรือจำเป็นต้องใช้เสียงดังๆ ถ้าเป็นกลุ่มผมก็เข้าใจอยู่หรอก

แล้วหนังสือติวนี้มันยังงี้

"นักเลงคิเบอร์วิพากษ์วิจารณ์" นี่มันหมายความว่าไง

คนที่วิจารณ์ในโลกไซเบอร์นี่เป็นนักเลงคิเบอร์อะ

ถ้าฉันผมก็จะเรียกพวกนักหนังสือพิมพ์ว่า "ก๊วยเครื่องพิมพ์" ละกัน

ใช้คำเหมารวมว่าคนที่วิพากษ์วิจารณ์เป็นพวกไรอารยะซะงั้น

เดี๋ยวก็นี่แปลงร่างเป็น.....

แก้ไขเมื่อ 24 ธ.ค. 55 09:31:59

Full translation of this comment

Hang on.

Why don't they do private tutoring in the student's home?

In Japan, they hire a private teacher to teach at home too.

Advantages are plentiful.

1 Quiet.

2 Convenient. No need to suffer pressure from others.

3 Parents are at home. The chance of any trouble is barely possible.

4 Food and snacks are at ease.

Why don't Thais do this?

What's more, private tutoring can be in a library, but I see the point of becoming loud if the tuition is done in a group.

And what on earth is going on with Matichon ²²?

"Keyboard hooligan criticised", what the heck does that mean?

Are critics in the cyber world a keyboard hooligan? Hah?

If so, I'll call you, the press, a "typewriter bum."

You named the critics collectively as an uncivilized group,
then I'll convert myself to be....



จากคุณ : Sieghart 😊
เขียนเมื่อ : 24 ธ.ค. 55 09:30:29 [แก้ไข]
ถูกใจ : Silencess, babbaboy, มัลลิกาพยอม, มีว ณ ขนวิว

²² The name of the newspaper, one of Thailand's quality dailies.

Framework for the analysis of the discourse in this comment

This comment, which emerges at the third position in thread, is posted by a Pantip user under the pseudonym of *Sieghart*. It was found satisfying by four forum members as a result of a suggestion on the venue for private tutoring, and criticism of the language used in the newspaper. The analysis of *Sieghart*'s discourse is presented in the table below.

Discursive practices Intertextuality and socio-cultural practices	Is there the reproduction of a power relationship?	Is there the restructuring of a power relationship?	Is there the challenging of hegemony?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the macro level?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the micro level?
Economic context	-	-	-	-	-
Political context	-	-	-	-	-
Cultural context According to the claim in the comment, the writer seems to have life experience in Japan.	-	-	-	-	-
Belief / Individual attitude Expression of ideas and opinions is everybody's right and it can be done freely anywhere and in any form.	-	Ordinary people have rights and freedoms in communication equal to that the press has and does.	If the press considers the people expressing views strongly on the Internet to be hooligans, then the public can also consider the press expressing their views seriously in the papers to be hooligans.	-	Language used in the lower part of the comment appears to be confronta- tional. However, from the drawing attached at the end, it seems that the writer aims to tease rather than to assault.

5.8 Analysis 8: Original message created by *Jesus2000--=AnThraX=*
Source: <http://pantip.com/topic/30033748>

หนุ่ม-สาวรัสเซียซึ่งบ๊วกไบค์ยกล้อ เสียหลักดีลังกา ผู้หญิงดับสยอง

การจราจร มอเตอร์ไซด์ กระชู้ข่าว



หนุ่ม-สาวรัสเซียซึ่งบ๊วกไบค์ยกล้อ เสียหลักดีลังกา ผู้หญิงดับสยอง

เมื่อเวลา 00.10 น. วันที่ 10 ม.ค. ผู้สื่อข่าว ชาวสด รายงานว่า ร.ต.ต.จักรกฤษณ์ จันดา คำ ร้อยเวรสอบสวน สภ.เมืองพัทยา รับแจ้งเหตุรถจักรยานยนต์ชนคน นอนสภาพหงายหน้า บริเวณเกาะศอกหลัง ล้าคอ หักคิตรูป ศีรษะมีบาดแผลฉกรรจ์ เลือดไหลนอง แขนหักขาขาดแผลไม่ไหว เสียชีวิตระหว่างนำตัวส่งรพ. ส่วนอีกราย ชายต่างชาติ ทราบชื่อคือ Mr.Nicolai perfiyer อายุ 38 ปี สัญชาติรัสเซีย กระเด็นหลุดออกมาตอนตรงริมฟุตบาท ถลอกตามร่างกาย ได้รับบาดเจ็บเล็กน้อย ก่อนนำตัวส่งรพ. พัทธยาเนโมเรียล

ในที่เกิดเหตุพบถนนเลนขวา กลางถนน พบร่างหญิงสาวต่างชาติ ทราบชื่อเบื้องต้นคือ Mrs.Julia Zerkino อายุ 28 ปี สัญชาติรัสเซีย นอนสภาพหงายหน้า บริเวณเกาะศอกหลัง ล้าคอ หักคิตรูป ศีรษะมีบาดแผลฉกรรจ์ เลือดไหลนอง แขนหักขาขาดแผลไม่ไหว เสียชีวิตระหว่างนำตัวส่งรพ. ส่วนอีกราย ชายต่างชาติ ทราบชื่อคือ Mr.Nicolai perfiyer อายุ 38 ปี สัญชาติรัสเซีย กระเด็นหลุดออกมาตอนตรงริมฟุตบาท ถลอกตามร่างกาย ได้รับบาดเจ็บเล็กน้อย ก่อนนำตัวส่งรพ. พัทธยาเนโมเรียล

ตรวจสอบที่เกิดเหตุบริเวณขอบฟุตบาท พบรถจักรยานยนต์ ยี่ห้อ ซูซูกิ บ๊วกไบค์ รุ่น อาร์ จีเอสเอ็กซ์ 750 ซีซี สีน้ำเงิน ทะเบียนป้ายแดง 9-629 สภ.เมืองพัทยา ล้มอยู่ในสภาพได้รับความเสียหาย โดยมีชาวบ้าน นักท่องเที่ยว พากันมุงดูที่เกิดเหตุ รวมถึงการจราจรสายชายหาดยังคงติดขัดอีกด้วย จนท.จึงกั้นที่เกิดเหตุ เรงระบายการจราจร ให้ตำรวจเข้าเก็บหลักฐาน ก่อนจะรายงานสถานทูตและญาติรับทราบตามลำดับ เพื่อจะนำศพไปบำเพ็ญกุศลทางศาสนา

สอบถามพยานผู้เห็นเหตุการณ์รายหนึ่งทราบเบื้องต้นว่า ขณะกำลังเดินข้ามถนนไปเดินฝั่งชายหาด จู่ๆได้ยินเสียงบีตรถจักรยานยนต์ดังมาก ก่อนจะหันไปดูพบว่า Mr.Nicolai ผู้ขับขี่ สวมหมวกกันน็อกนิรภัย ส่วน Mrs.Julia นั่งซ้อนท้ายมาไม่สวมหมวก จากนั้นเห็นว่าตัวรถถอยล่อมาด้วยความเร็ว และเกิดเสียหลักดีลังกา ก่อนไถลลงมาติดขอบฟุตบาท จึงทำให้ร่างหญิงนั่งซ้อนมาศีรษะและร่างกระแทกพื้นอย่างแรง ส่วนคนขับก็กระเด็นไปคนละทิศทาง

http://www.khaosod.co.th/view_newsonline.php?newsid=TVRNMU56YzRPRGN5TXc9PQ==&catid=01

Jesus2000 --=AnThraX=--
10 มกราคม 2556 เวลา 14:49 น.

Summary of this news

In Pattaya, there was a motorcycle crash which caused the death of a 28-year-old Russian female tourist. Another tourist, a 30-year-old Russian male, was only slightly injured. The eyewitness described seeing the motorcycle moving at very high speed with its front wheel aloft. Then it turned a somersault and hit the pavement. A passenger behind the motorcyclist, a female tourist without a helmet, lost her life when she was dropped onto the road.

Most satisfying comment in the thread



Full translation of this comment

Shame on him....He thought that he could control it...but it fell over instead.
I don't feel pity for the man, but feel sorry for the woman.
She was not meant to die because of the man's silliness.

Police must put him on trial too, because it results from criminal negligence causing death. The maximum imprisonment is 10 years (Article 291, Criminal Code of Thailand).

Framework for the analysis of the discourse in this comment

This comment sits in the eighteenth position in the thread and gets a satisfied emoticon from one forum member. *น้ำออด (Uncle Aod)* is the pseudonym of a Pantip user who has criticised the carelessness of a foreign male tourist who was involved in a motorbike accident. The analysis of this discourse is presented in the table below.

Discursive practices Intertextuality and socio-cultural practices	Is there the reproduction of a power relationship?	Is there the restructuring of a power relationship?	Is there the challenging of hegemony?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the macro level?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the micro level?
Economic context	-	-	-	-	-
Political context	-	-	-	-	-
Cultural context As well as gender stereotypes, The Thai perception of gender roles are that a man must protect a woman from harm and injury.	-	-	-	-	-
Belief / Individual attitude (1) A woman, particularly in the news, should obtain a better standard and a higher degree of protection from a man. (2) The man, particularly the one in the news, should be punished for his carelessness.	(1) From the perspective of the writer of the comment, the woman is in a passive role, whereas the man performs an active role. (2) Police force is in charge of the infliction of penalties.	-	-	Act 291 of Criminal Code of Thailand.	-

5.9 Analysis 9: Original message created by JD300
Source: <http://pantip.com/topic/30034034>

ดร. นาซา เป้ !! พายุสุริยะไม่ทำให้น้ำท่วม แต่ทำให้ฝนแล้ง !!

วิทยาศาสตร์ กระทู้ข่าว

จาก http://www.matichon.co.th/news_detail.php?newsid=1357629049&qrid=&catid=19&subcatid=1904

"วิศวกรนาซา" ชี้พายุสุริยะไม่ได้ทำให้โลกแตก-น้ำไม่ท่วม แต่แล้ง ร้อนขึ้น
วันที่ 08 มกราคม พ.ศ. 2556 เวลา 14:24:14 น.

เมื่อวันที่ 8 มกราคม ที่อาคารเอกประสงค์สำนักงานใหญ่การปะปนนครหลวง จัดการบรรยายเรื่องพายุสุริยะ โดยมีนายกองภ อยุ่เย็น ผู้เชี่ยวชาญด้านวิศวกรรมกรรมการออกแบบเครื่องตรวจจับคลื่นไมโครเวฟอินฟราเรด จากองค์การบริหารการบินและอวกาศแห่งชาติ ประเทศสหรัฐอเมริกา(นาซา) เป็นวิทยากร

นายกองภ กล่าวว่า ในปีนี้เป็นช่วงที่พายุสุริยะจะเกิดขึ้นในรอบ 11 ปี ซึ่งพายุสุริยะที่เกิดขึ้นไม่ใช่ภัยพิบัติโลกแตก แต่จะส่งผลให้สภาพภูมิอากาศของโลกมีความแปรปรวน โดยพายุสุริยะจะมีผลกระทบกับสภาพอากาศ และพลังงานความร้อนใต้พิภพของโลก เช่น ภูเขาไฟระเบิด แผ่นดินไหว ที่อาจจะมีมากกว่าปกติเดือนละ 1-2 ครั้ง แต่สำหรับประเทศไทยนั้น สภาพอากาศในปีนี้จะแล้ง ไม่มีน้ำท่วม เนื่องจากปริมาณรังสีคอสมิกชนนอกโลก หรือพลังงานประจุไฟฟ้าจากนอกโลกจะน้อยลง ส่งผลให้น้ำในอากาศลดลง ทำให้เกิดความแห้งแล้งบนโลก นอกจากนี้อากาศจะร้อนขึ้นอย่างต่อเนื่อง ซึ่งประชาชนสามารถสัมผัสได้ว่ามีอุณหภูมิสูงขึ้น ทั้งนี้ การเกิดพายุสุริยะในรอบ 11 ปี จะเกิด 3 วันต่อ 1 ครั้ง และไม่รุนแรง ซึ่งเราสามารถสังเกตเห็นความแปรปรวนของสภาพอากาศที่เกิดจากพายุสุริยะได้ด้วยตาเปล่า โดยประเทศที่อยู่บริเวณแถบเส้นศูนย์สูตรจะสามารถสังเกตเห็นได้จากเมฆที่มีลักษณะแปลกตา เป็นริ้วๆ หรือเป็นลอนคลื่น ซึ่งระยะเวลาในการเกิดจะเกิดนาน 24 ชั่วโมง ส่วนบริเวณขั้วโลกจะเกิดแสงเหนือแสงใต้

"เรื่องที่ไม่ใช่เรื่องรุนแรงที่จะเป็นภัยพิบัติโลกแตก เป็นภัยธรรมชาติที่เกิดขึ้นในชีวิตประจำวัน ซึ่งส่วนใหญ่จะเป็นเรื่องของการเผารังมากกว่า เพื่อให้เราตระหนักถึงผลกระทบที่จะเกิดกับโลกที่มีอยู่เป็นระยะๆ ซึ่งหน่วยงานที่เกี่ยวข้องก็จะต้องเฝ้าติดตามสถานการณ์ และทำให้ประชาชนรู้เท่าทันภัยธรรมชาติ" นายกองภกล่าว

****เพิ่มเติม****

ในที่สุด ก็ขึ้นกระทู้แนะนำแล้ว ... เห็นได้ชัดเลยว่าถ้าตั้งกระทู้โดยใส่ tag แค่นั้นเดียว มันจะไม่แพร่กระจายไปหลายห้องให้ได้รับเสียงโหวตเยอะๆ ... แต่ผมก็ไม่อยากทำอย่างนั้นนะ ไม่จึ้นคงมีคนห้องอื่นมาบ่นบ้างแน่ๆ

แก้ไขข้อความเมื่อ 11 มกราคม 2556 เวลา 10:46 น.

68 + 60 | JD300 
10 มกราคม 2556 เวลา 16:15 น.

ผมไม่เคยผมมาซื้อลูกชิ้น ถูกใจ, บรรณรัตน์ ถูกใจ, La Liberta ถูกใจ, crazyoatza ถูกใจ, เกิดในท้องฟ้า ทั้ง, thebesbz ถูกใจ, สมาชิกหมายเลข 704684 ถูกใจ, MondayCool ถูกใจ, Jargon Pi Harston ถูกใจ, กบยักษ์ ถูกใจรวมถึงอีก 50 คน ร่วมแสดงความรู้สึก

Summary of this news

Dr. Kongphop Yuyen, a Thai expert in engineering design for an infra-red microwave detector at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), gave a special talk at the Head Office of the Metropolitan Waterworks Authority on the effects of solar storms on the global climate. For Thailand, in this year, solar storms would not cause any floods. On the contrary, it would cause drought and persistently hotter weather.

Most satisfying comment in the thread



Full translation of this comment

Well, I wanna know if we can take legal action against a pack of those creating all this load of baloney if it happens to be a lie.

Like what PlaBoo's dad²³ was.

Or the action can be taken because he's just an ordinary person...but for people with Doctor, as a title, it can't be. Double standards in life.

²³ Thongbai Khamsi, the 73-year-old father of his late 5-year-old son, known as PlaBoo, who passed away 37 years ago, reminded people of his son's prediction that one of the country's largest dams would burst open on the night of 31st December, 2011. In an interview that was broadcast on the YouTube website, this revelation spread widely and created national panic. However, he was charged with causing public harm by raising a false alarm. Subsequently, he was subjected to a 15-day jail sentence, pending a two-year probation period. Source: The Nation (2012). Available at: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/opinion/Thais-fall-too-easily-for-rumour-and-superstition-30173622.html>

Framework for the analysis of the discourse in this comment

This twenty-fifth comment in the thread received a satisfied emoticon from two forum members. It was posted by a Pantip user, under the pseudonym of *NO one see ME*, who expressed the view that a person's identity and social class must not result in unequal treatment under the law. The analysis of this discourse is presented in the table below.

Discursive practices Intertextuality and socio-cultural practices	Is there the reproduction of a power relationship?	Is there the restructuring of a power relationship?	Is there the challenging of hegemony?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the macro level?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the micro level?
Economic context	-	-	-	-	-
Political context	-	-	-	-	-
Cultural context Severe flooding in 2011 is still a frightening experience for Thai people. As with natural disasters, disseminating information about hydrological matters must be done with awareness, not intuition. Those, who communicate such issues with deception or misconceptions, are considered to be a "troublesome" group, according to the writer of the comment.	-	-	-	-	The use of the word " <i>baloney</i> " for fallacious and distorted information, and " <i>pack of those</i> " for people creating that baloney. In the Thai context, "pack" refers to a group of people regarded as unpleasant.
Belief / Individual attitude All people are equal in fundamental worth and must be treated equally. So, whoever has been found blameworthy, she/he must face judgment as equals.	-	-	People in a high social class, for example, those who are rich and well-educated, are no more well-behaved than people in a lower social class.	-	Juxtaposition of the words " <i>ordinary people</i> " and " <i>people with Doctor as a title</i> " as well as the use of the word " <i>double standards in life.</i> "

- 5.10 Analysis 10: Original message created by *Khmer Su-rin*
Source: <http://pantip.com/topic/30017712>

ทายาท "เปล่งพานิช" นอกใจ ใครมาเพี้ยสั่งถอดละครพ่อ

การเมือง กระตุ๋น

สະຫັດ! ខ្លាំងបែបណា "ជិត្រឌី" ប្រើប្រាស់ប្រព័ន្ធប្រតិបត្តិការ "ហ្វេសប៊ី" ប្រើប្រាស់ប្រព័ន្ធប្រតិបត្តិការ

"គុណ-ប្រធាន ប្រធាន" ... "ប្រើប្រាស់ប្រព័ន្ធប្រតិបត្តិការ ប្រើប្រាស់ប្រព័ន្ធប្រតិបត្តិការ"


"ប្រើប្រាស់ - ប្រធាន ប្រធាន" ... "ការពិតប្រាកដប្រជា"

"ក្រុម-សិប្បកម្ម ប្រធាន" ... "ប្រើប្រាស់ប្រព័ន្ធប្រតិបត្តិការ ប្រើប្រាស់ប្រព័ន្ធប្រតិបត្តិការ"

ลูกๆ ของ จิตร์ชัย และสินชัย เปล่งพานิช โพสต์ข้อความ แฉมหรพรายใครอยู่เบื้องหลัง "แบน" ละครของพ่อแม่ ส่วนลูกสาว มาลีนนท์ หนีไม่ไหวโพสต์ขอ
ความเห็นใจหลังเพจและเว็บไซต์ช่อง 3 ถูกถล่มจนล่มหลายรอบ ด้าน นกขาย และนกหญิง กล่าวขอบคุณทุกกำลังใจก่อนลัดฟ้าท่องเลบานอน

<http://www.naewna.com/entertain/36344>

😊 แกล้งข้อความเมื่อ 5 มกราคม 2556 เวลา 22:59 น.

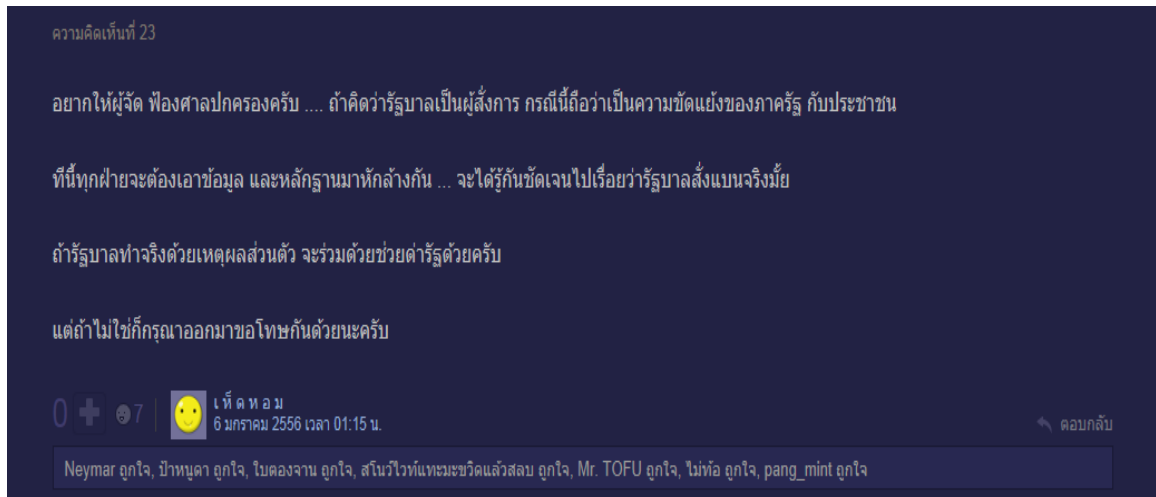
1 + 7 |  Khmer Su-rin 🤔
5 มกราคม 2556 เวลา 22:58 น.

ทวนกระแสดูใจ, ทนายเดวิดเน่ชาตินหนึ่ง ดูใจ, โนบิต ดูใจ, oneofineday5 ดูใจ, อัดดีท้าวหน้าผ่า ดูใจ, gw ดูใจ, ตัวกลมแก้มป่อง หลงรัก

Summary of this news

After the soap opera “Nuea Mek” (*Above the Cloud*) was pulled off the air by TV Channel 3 without any reasonable explanation, the producer’s son and daughter posted some statements on Facebook giving a hint about the arbitrary use of the power of politicians who might be involved in the banning of this programme.

Most satisfying comment in the thread



Full translation of this comment

I'd like the producer to bring a suit to the Administrative Court....if he thought it was the order of the government. This case is regarded as a conflict between a state agency and the public.

Then all the parties have to debate it with information and evidence... This will give a clear picture about whether the ban is truly due to the government's orders.

If the government truly did it with particular reasons, I'll go with the public to blame them.

But if they didn't, please express apologies too.

Framework for the analysis of the discourse in this comment

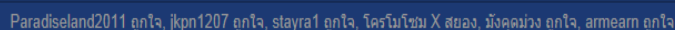
เห็ดหอม (*Shiitake Mushroom*) is the pseudonym of the Pantip user who posted this comment, which sits in twenty-third position in the thread and gets 'satisfaction' from seven forum members. The comment comes with the suggestion of the suspicions of political interference in the television serial drama's cancellation. The analysis of this discourse is presented in the table below.

Discursive practices Intertextuality and socio-cultural practices	Is there the reproduction of a power relationship?	Is there the restructuring of a power relationship?	Is there the challenging of hegemony?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the macro level?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the micro level?
Economic context	-	-	-	-	-
Political context Thailand's Administrative Court was established by Article 276 of the 1997 Constitution of Thailand. It specializes in disputes concerning the exercise of public power.	-	-	This is a dispute between state agency, officials and citizens. A soap opera producer should conduct an impeachment.	Relevant documentation and available evidence are involved in this legal action.	Conditions shown in the writer's comment are "Directive." The point of this illocutionary act consists of making an attempt to get the TV producer and the forum users to do something.
Cultural context	-	-	-	-	-
Belief / Individual attitude (1) Currently, there is no body of facts or argument establishing a fact, therefore, the conclusion about a person behind "Nuea Mek's" cancellation cannot be reached. (2) If it is proven that the cancellation results from the arbitrary use of the power of politicians, then the government must be responsible for this uproar. Likewise, if politicians have no connection with it, then the soap opera producer's family and audience must apologise for their offence.	-	-	-	-	Conditions shown in the writer's comment are "Directive." The point of this illocutionary act consists of making an attempt to get the TV producer and the forum users to do something.

5.11 Analysis 11: Original message created by *Dr. Mooh* (หมอหนู)
Source: <http://pantip.com/topic/30052581>

“หมอฟลอย” ฉีดฟิลเลอร์ให้พริตตี้สาวจนคางเบี้ยวมอบตัวแล้ว

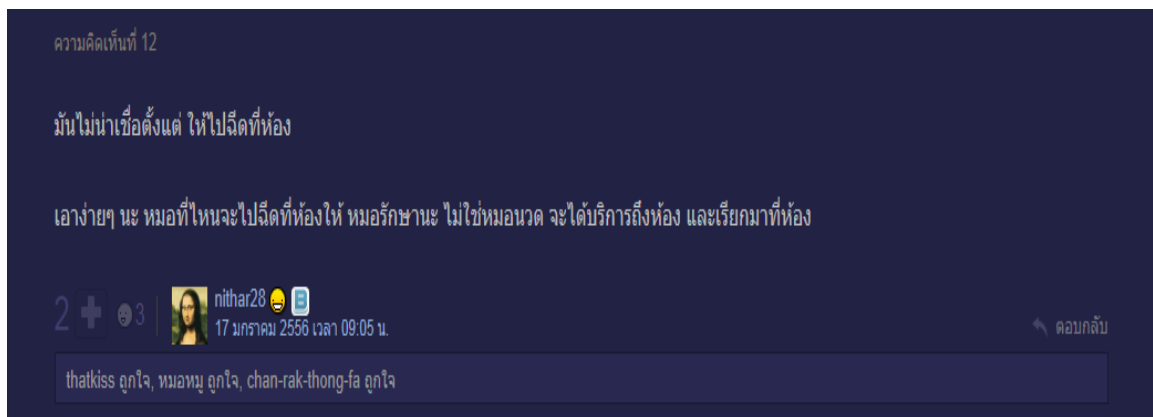
 กระทุ้งข้าว



Summary of this news

“Dr Ploy”, who claimed to be a specialist in filler injections and exercised her fraudulent beauty treatment in a hotel room, causing the victim’s official complaint to police and to the Office of the Consumer Protection Board due to damaged facial skin caused by fake wrinkle fillers, had already surrendered to the police today. Dr Ploy admitted the allegation of wrongful medical treatment. However, she denied the allegation of racketeering.

Most satisfying comment in the thread



Full translation of this comment

It's dubious when the injection is made in a hotel room.

The bottom line is who on earth does injections in a private room? It's an MD, not a masseur who can supply a call-out service.

Framework for the analysis of the discourse in this comment

This twelfth comment in the thread was found satisfying by three forum members.

It was posted by a Pantip user with the pseudonym *Nithar28*. The writer expressed his/her opinion in that critical thinking is essential in order to form a judgment and to develop trust. The analysis of this discourse is presented in the table below.

Discursive practices Intertextuality and socio-cultural practices	Is there the reproduction of a power relationship?	Is there the restructuring of a power relationship?	Is there the challenging of hegemony?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the macro level?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the micro level?
Economic context	-	-	-	-	-
Political context	-	-	-	-	-
Cultural context In the Thai language, The word “หมอ” (doctor) is commonly used informally as the representation of a person who possesses detailed knowledge and who is highly skilled in a specific field. As a consequence, for example, massage therapists, lawyers, astrologers, and medical practitioners are “doctor” in spoken language.	-	-	-	-	In this comment, the writer applied the word “หมอ” (doctor) as a satire in referring to a “masseur” who can provide a call-out service, while a physician is clearly unable to do so.
Belief / Individual attitude The person, in the news, who suffered after the counterfeit beauty treatment is credulous and naïve. (In other words, one should be cautious before believing in something.)	-	-	-	-	-

5.12 Analysis 12: Original message created by 23Grandeur (23เอี่ยมวิไล)
Source: <http://2g.pantip.com/cafe/social/topic/U13051539/U13051539.html>

👤 นาดนางรำ.... บ้ายนี้มีเรื่องเศร้า 👍❤️📧

เป็นเรื่อง ชังเอ๋ย ที่ไม่ยาก เจอ เลย
ฝาก...ผู้ปกครองดูแล และไว้ เป็น อุทาหรณ์

เมื่อ...เริ่ด จาก โรงเรียน ในอำเภอ แห่งหนึ่ง ในจังหวัด สุพรรณบุรี
มาที่ศูนย์ศึกษา หลังจากได้เป็นตัวแทน ของ จังหวัด
มาแข่งวิชาการ ที่จังหวัด ระยอง
ขาดลับ คุณครู แนะนำ ที่ นาดนางรำ สดหีบ
เพื่อเป็นรางวัล ที่ทำชื่อเสียงให้แก่โรงเรียน
2 เด็กชาย กับ 1 เด็กหญิง วัย 8-9 ขวบ
ลงเล่นน้ำอย่าง สนุกสนาน

เมื่อถึงเวลา ทานข้าว ครู จึงเรียก เด็ก ขึ้นมาทานข้าว
1เด็กหญิง 1เด็กชาย ก็ขึ้น มาตาม ที่ครู เรียก
แต่เพื่อน อีก 1 คน หายไป

สักครู่ ก็มี คนอุ้มร่าง ของเด็กชาย ขึ้นมา และ นำส่ง
โรงพยาบาล สมเด็จ พระนางเจ้าสิริกิติ์ พระบรมราชินีนาถ

ผม มีโอกาส ได้พูดคุย กับ เด็กทั้ง 2 ที่โรงพยาบาล
แล้ว...บอกตรงๆ เศร้า สุดๆ ครับ

เด็ก อยู่ผู้หนึ่ง ในอาการช็อค นั่งเงียบอย่างเดียว
เริ่ดก็ ขยี้ ก็พอจะคุยเรื่องบ้าง
ที่สำคัญ ผู้ปกครอง ไม่ได้ไปด้วย

ปล.ที่จริง มีคลิป สัมภาษณ์ เด็ก อยู่
แต่ คงไม่เอา มาลง นะครับ



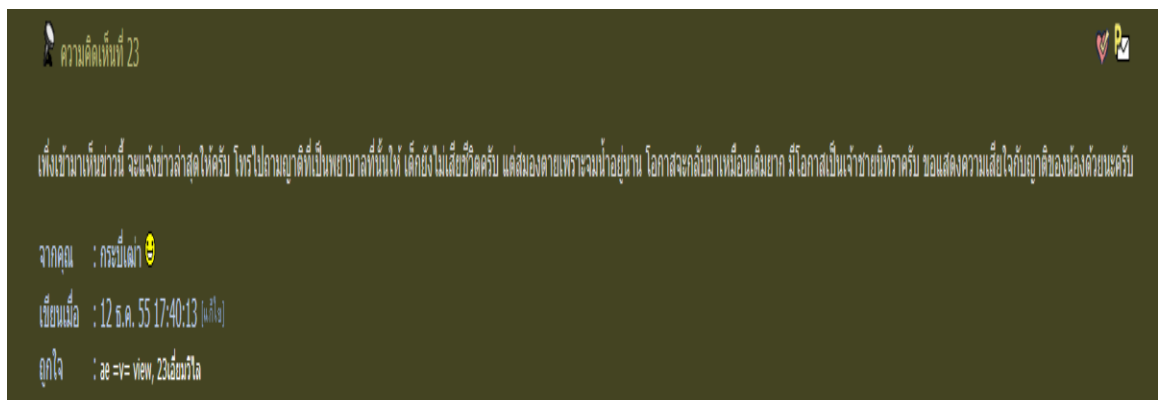
จากคุณ : 23เอี่ยมวิไล 🇹🇭🇵🇹
เขียนเมื่อ : 11 ธ.ค. 55 16:46:24 (แก้ไข)
ถูกใจ : ต้นตอชาญมณี, บุญถิ่น, คนหลงกับขุน, Julia-Robot.JR, ธลชาญ19, tintila

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Summary of this news

Three primary school students, who are between eight and nine years of age, were swimming in the sea at a beach in Rayong Province with no teacher's supervision. One of them drowned and became unconscious. He was sent to hospital later by bystanders. His latest condition has not been unveiled.

Most satisfying comment in the thread



Full translation of this comment

I just saw this news and would like to report the latest information. I phoned and asked one of my relatives who is a nurse there. The child is not dead but his brain is failing to function because of the prolonged drowning. He seems unlikely to be able to get back to normal and there is a chance that he will become a Sleeping Prince. I would like to express my condolences to the child's family.

Framework for the analysis of the discourse in this comment

This comment appeared in the twenty-third position in the thread and there were two forum members who reacted to it. It was posted by กระบี่เด๋อ (Aged Sword), who gave the follow-up information on the accident that was reported earlier by the forum starter. The analysis of this discourse is presented in the table below.

Discursive practices Intertextuality and socio-cultural practices	Is there the reproduction of a power relationship?	Is there the restructuring of a power relationship?	Is there the challenging of hegemony?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the macro level?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the micro level?
Economic context	-	-	-	-	-
Political context	-	-	-	-	-
Cultural context According to the language used and the reaction expressed in the comment, it is apparent that the writer has positive personality characteristics, including being caring, polite and generous.	-	-	-	-	(1) The use of the word นะครับ (Na Krab) to convey politeness at the end of almost every sentence. (2) The expression of sympathy to the child's family in the final remark.
Belief / Individual attitude	-	-	-	-	-

5.13 Analysis 13: Original message created by *Uncle Leo* (น้ำลิโอ)

Source: <http://pantip.com/topic/30033293>

<<... ผมเห็นด้วย ที่กระทรวงศึกษา ยกเลิกกฎระเบียบทรงผมนักเรียน ...>>

ปัญหาสังคม ปัญหาชีวิต ครอบครัว โรงเรียนอนุบาล

กระตุกสนทนา

ตามที่ทางกระทรวงศึกษายกเลิกกฎ
ผมทรงเกเรียน นักเรียนชาย
และ นักเรียนหญิง ผมสั้นเพียงดังหู

อยากให้ทางกระทรวงศึกษา
คิดแผน การเรียนการสอน ปลูกฝัง จริยธรรม คุณธรรม
สำหรับเด็กนักเรียน เพิ่มขึ้น

มากกว่า เรื่องทรงผม

ทำไม เด็กญี่ปุ่น สามารถปลูกฝัง
ในเรื่องการ คำนึงถึงสิทธิ ของคนอื่นในสังคมได้

ทำไม เด็กไทย เราไม่ปลูกฝังกัน ทั้งเรื่อง การเชื่อฟังผู้ใหญ่
การนึกถึงสิทธิของคนอื่น

ในรศสาธารณะ ทั้งรถไฟฟ้าว รถเมส ลิฟต์ โรงหนัง
เด็กนักเรียน คอยโทรศัพท์ ในที่สาธารณะ

ผู้ใหญ่ของญี่ปุ่น ว่ากล่าวตักเตือนได้ และเขาก็ขอโทษ และหยุด

ถ้าเป็นเด็กไทย โดนสวนกลับแน่ ... "เจือกอะไรวะ"

เป็นใจหยาบที่ผู้ใหญ่กระทรวงวัฒนธรรม
กระทรวงศึกษา ต้องคิด และ ทำงานจริงจัง

เพราะตอนนี้ สังคมวัยรุ่นไทย กำลังป่วยหนัก
แค่คิดหวัง เรื่องความรัก ก็ฆ่ากันได้...

เด็กวัยรุ่นต่างสถาบัน ตึกกัน
เด็กแว้นซ์ ออกมาขับรถ รบกวนชาวบ้าน.....

จิตสำนึก ในการเคารพสิทธิของคนอื่น ของไทยเราไม่ค่อยจะปลูกฝังกัน
ปัญหา เด็กวัยรุ่น รุมสกรัมผู้ใหญ่ ที่ว่ากล่าวตักเตือน เห็นกันบ่อยๆ

แก้ไขข้อความเมื่อ 10 มกราคม 2556 เวลา 12:47 น.

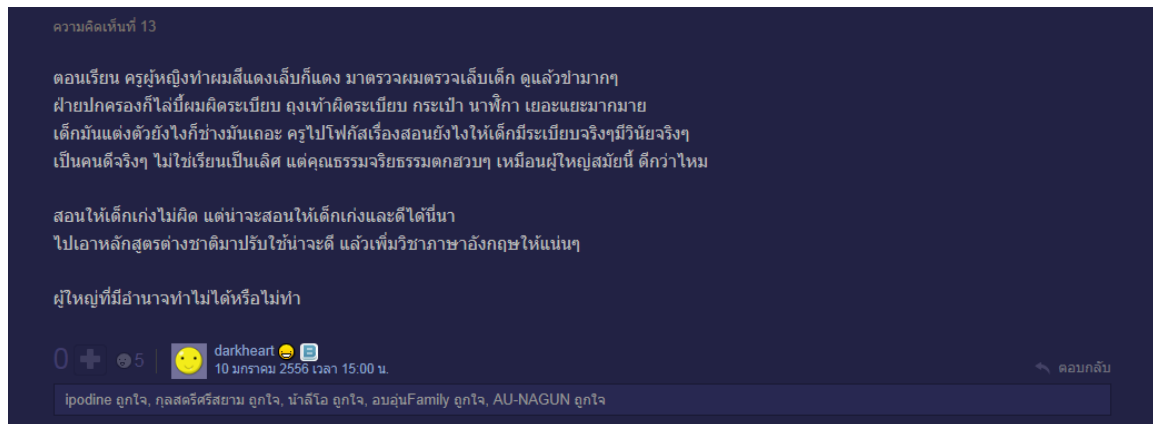
4 + 9 | น้ำลิโอ 10 มกราคม 2556 เวลา 12:45 น.

Donah ถูกใจ, ปลาดิบ@จแป้น ถูกใจ, Beau_ra ถูกใจ, อบอุ่นFamily ถูกใจ, AU-NAGUN ถูกใจ, praww_1 ถูกใจ, นึกฟต ถูกใจ, <<<<Wave>>>> ถูกใจ, หลอดสีรุ้ง ถูกใจ

Summary of this news

Uncle Leo, the original message creator, agrees with the Ministry of Education in revoking the regulation stating that secondary-school students must have student-style short hair. However, he suggests that the curriculum should be more focused on ethics and morality, including respecting the rights of others, the downsides of emotional abuse, and aggression against adults.

Most satisfying comment in the thread



Full translation of this comment

When I was in school, a lady teacher with red-tinted hair and red nails inspected student's hair and nails. That looked so funny.

The Admin. also gave chase to wrong hair, wrong socks, school bag, watch, etc.

Whatever children wear, let it be. Is it better if teachers focus on teaching them about how to be really and greatly well-behaved, not to be superb in their learning, but in ethical behaviour, which is found to be deficient, as in today's grown-ups?

Teaching them to be skilled is not wrong, but teaching them to be good can be done at the same time. It sounds good to adapt a foreign curriculum and to make English-language subject more intense.

The people in charge are unable or uninterested in doing this?

Framework for the analysis of the discourse in this comment

This comment, which emerges in the thirteenth position in the thread, is posted by a Pantip user under the pseudonym *Darkheart*. It was found satisfying by five forum members, as a result of the suggestion about the revolution in education. The criticism of Thailand's educational authorities is also inserted. The analysis of *Darkheart's* discourse is presented in the table below.

Discursive practices Intertextuality and socio-cultural practices	Is there the reproduction of a power relationship?	Is there the restructuring of a power relationship?	Is there the challenging of hegemony?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the macro level?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the micro level?
Economic context	-	-	-	-	-
Political context	-	-	-	-	-
Cultural context School regulations issued by the military rulers in 1972 required that all Thai students in the primary and secondary levels must keep their hair short. Moreover, wearing long nails and accessories are strictly prohibited. On the contrary, there are no such regulations for teachers. Dressing politely is generally a central requirement.	A school's Administration Department is responsible for conducting the rules, and overseeing and penalizing the students who break the rules.	In fact, there are no formal rules for the conduct of teachers' outfits. However, a teacher having red-tinted hair and a red manicure is regarded as being inappropriate, according to the comment's writer, but she has the power to direct and punish students who have long hair and long nails.	-	-	Phrase " <i>look so funny</i> " connotes a paradox, when a teacher is enabled to sport a fashionable look, but students have to strictly follow rules.
Belief / Individual attitude (1) In the schooling system, the cultivation of self-discipline and morality are more important than academic excellence and rigidity about what students wear. (2) Executive officers of Thailand's educational government body are ineffective and/or lacking in attentiveness.	-	-	-	-	Two question sentences in this comment are intended to evoke the readers' thoughts and to find agreement, rather than seeking answers.


- 5.14 Analysis 14: Original message created by *Phaitoon* (ไพฑูรย์)
Source: <http://pantip.com/topic/30100593>

"ปู้"ได้นิวยอร์กไทมส์ไม่ใช่นายกฯครายาง!! ช่าข้าค๊ะ

การเมือง กระทุ้งข่าว

วันนี้...น.ส. ยิ่งลักษณ์ ชินวัตร นายกรัฐมนตรีได้ออกมาตอบโต้กรณีที่มีนิวยอร์กไทม์ตั้งคำถามเธอไม่ใช่นายกรัฐมนตรีจริง แม่กระทั้งประชุมครม. พี่ช่าย "แม้ว" ยังสโลสสั่งงานด้วยตัวเอง คุณละเชื่อไหมว่า การบริหารประเทศไทยทุกวันนี้เธอทำเอง คิดเอง สั่งการเอง ตลอดมา %%% ช่า ๆ ค๊ะ

<http://www.siamrath.co.th/web/?q=%E0%B8%A2%E0%B8%B4%E0%B9%88%E0%B8%87%E0%B8%A5%E0%B8%B1%E0%B8%81%E0%B8%A9%E0%B8%93%E0%B9%8C%E0%B9%82%E0%B8%95%E0%B9%89%E0%B8%99%E0%B8%B4%E0%B8%A7%E0%B8%A2%E0%B8%AD%E0%B8%A3%E0%B9%8C%E0%B8%81%E0%B9%84%E0%B8%97%E0%B8%A1%E0%B8%AA%E0%B9%8C%E0%B8%99%E0%B8%B2%E0%B8%A2%E0%B8%81%E0%B8%AF%E0%B8%95%E0%B8%B1%E0%B8%A7%E0%B8%88%E0%B8%A3%E0%B8%B4%E0%B8%87-%E0%B8%9B%E0%B8%B1%E0%B8%94%E0%B8%97%E0%B8%B1%E0%B8%81%E0%B8%A9%E0%B8%B4%E0%B8%93%E0%B8%AA%E0%B9%84%E0%B8%81%E0%B8%9B%E0%B9%8C%E0%B8%9B%E0%B8%A3%E0%B8%B0%E0%B8%8A%E0%B8%B8%E0%B8%A1%E0%B8%84%E0%B8%A3%E0%B8%A1>

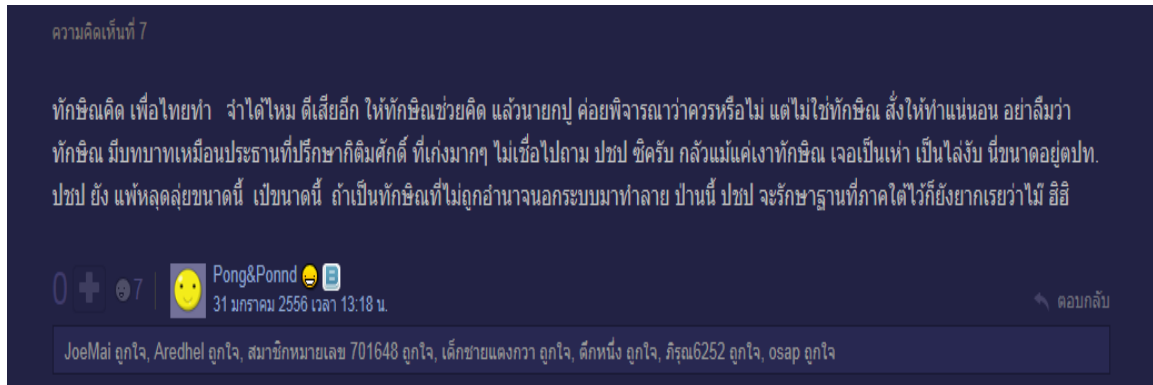
1 + 2 |  คนหน้าบาน 
31 มกราคม 2556 เวลา 12:55 น.

ทานากิ ช่ากลิ้ง, ตัวกลมแก้มป่อง ช่ากลิ้ง

Summary of this news

Ms. Yingluck Shinawatra denied a New York Times statement after it reported that she was not the real prime minister, because her brother, the ex-prime minister of Thailand, Thaksin Shinawatra, is still influential in Thai government administration and steers Yingluck's work through Skype.

Most satisfying comment in the thread



Full translation of this comment

Do you still recall the quote “Thaksin thinks, Pheu Thai does”? It’s nifty when Thaksin assists thinking and then PM Poo ²⁴ considers its applicability. But Thaksin is not the commander, for sure. Bearing in mind that Thaksin plays the role as the outstanding chairman of the advisory board. If you don’t agree, please ask the Democrats, who are afraid even of Thaksin’s shadow; always bark at him and bite whenever they meet him. Now he is abroad, and still the Democrats are beaten to a pulp, becoming black and blue. If Thaksin hadn’t been destroyed by underhand power, it might be today’s struggle for the Democrats to keep their powerbase in the South. Am I right? Heh Heh.

²⁴ Nickname of Ms. Yingluck Shinawatra, Prime Minister of Thailand (2011-2014).

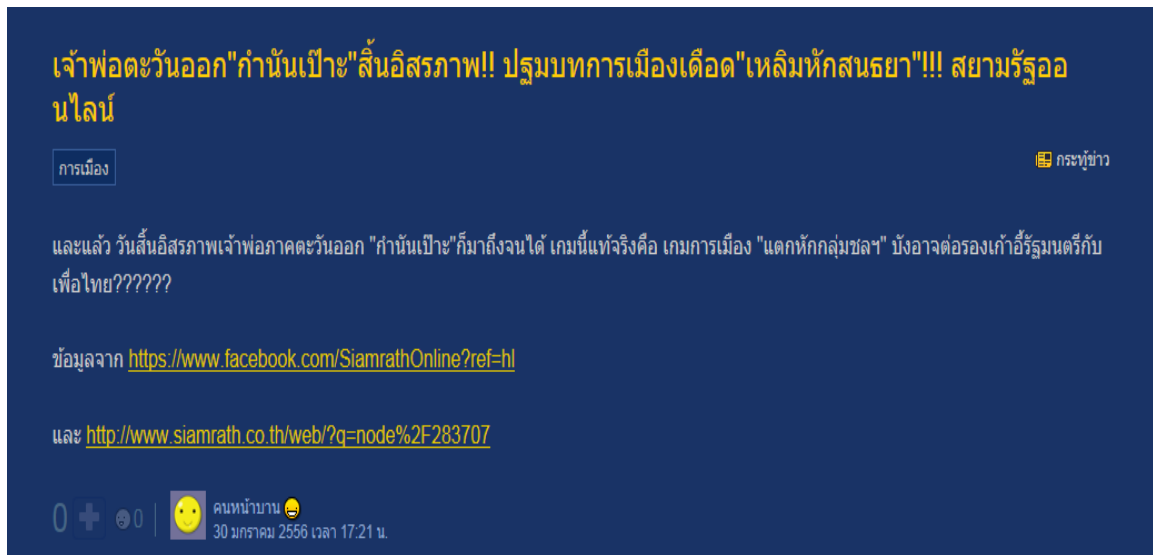
Framework for the analysis of the discourse in this comment

This comment appears in the seventh position in the thread and gets a satisfied emoticon from seven forum members. *Pong&Ponnd* is the pseudonym of a Pantip user who provided outspoken support of Thailand's former prime minister in this comment.

The analysis of this discourse is presented in the table below.

Discursive practices Intertextuality and socio-cultural practices	Is there the reproduction of a power relationship?	Is there the restructuring of a power relationship?	Is there the challenging of hegemony?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the macro level?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the micro level?
Economic context	-	-	-	-	-
Political context (1) The Pheu Thai (<i>For Thais</i>) Party and the Democrat Party are Thailand's dominant political parties, as well as being political rivals. The Democrats are popular with middle-class voters and have strong support in the South and Bangkok, whereas Pheu Thai is the latest incarnation of the ousted former prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra's party, and he now controls his party from self-imposed exile abroad. Its powerbase is the vote-rich North and Northeast. (2) According to a scornful abusive remark to the Democrats, the writer of this comment is a partisan of the Pheu Thai Party.	-	-	-	-	(1) In the Thai context, applying words used to describe an action of an animal to a human is a means with which to insult. Instead of writing ' <i>argue</i> ' and ' <i>challenge</i> ', the writer used ' <i>bark</i> ' and ' <i>bite</i> .' (2) Other disrespectful remark includes ' <i>be afraid of even Thaksin's shadow</i> ', ' <i>be beaten to a pulp</i> ' and ' <i>becoming black and blue</i> .'
Cultural context	-	-	-	-	-
Belief / Individual attitude	-	-	-	-	-

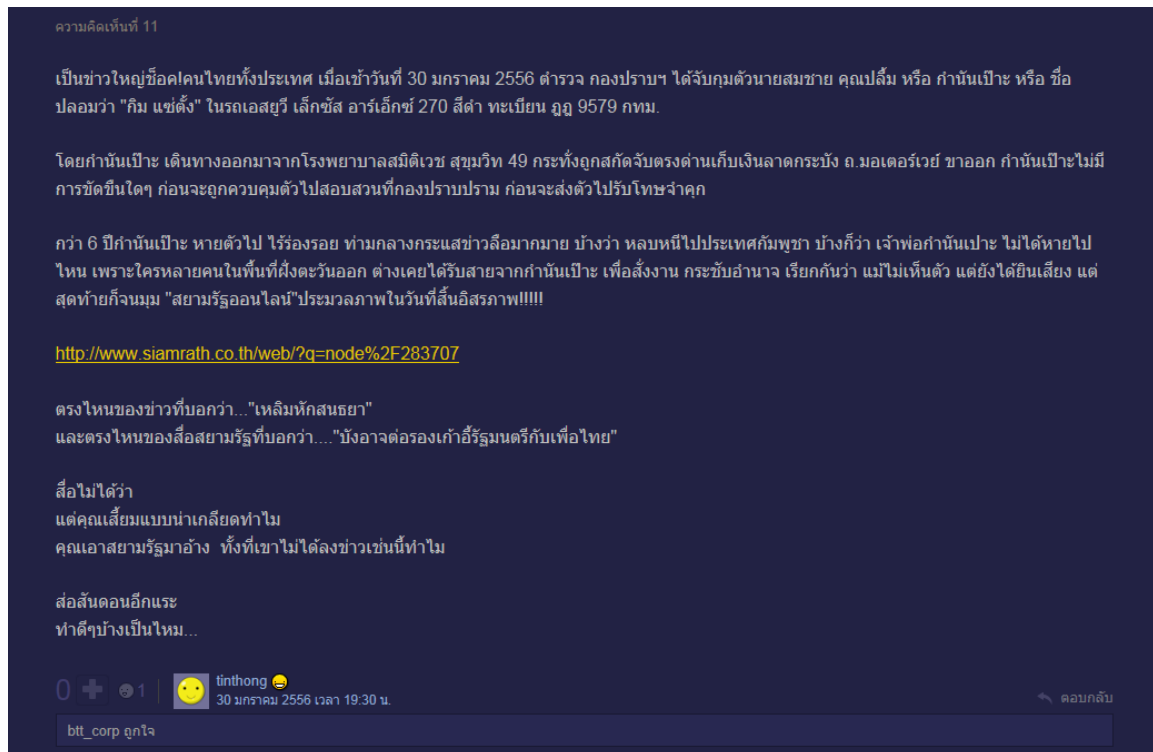
- 5.15 Analysis 15: Original message created by *Big-jaw Person* (คนหน้าบาน)
Source: <http://pantip.com/topic/30098006>



Summary of this news

The freedom of the eastern region tycoon, “Kamnan Poh”, has come to an end after he was arrested by the police in Bangkok. Is this arrest a matter of “political breaking down” because his son was daring to negotiate with the Pheu Thai Party for a ministerial position?

Most satisfying comment in the thread



Full translation of this comment

Where does it say in the news... “Loem²⁵ smashes Sontaya²⁶”?
And where does Siamrath say... “dare to negotiate for a Ministerial position with Pheu Thai Party”?

The media haven’t said that.
But why did you badly stir them up?
Why did you refer to Siamrath, despite the fact that they didn’t write such information?

Inborn trait as usual.
Do good things, can you?

²⁵ Colloquial name for Mr. Chaloeam Yubamrung, recently a Deputy Prime Minister to Yingluck Shinawatra.

²⁶ Mr. Sontaya Kunplome, the son of the eastern region tycoon “Kamnan Poh”.

Framework for the analysis of the discourse in this comment

This eleventh comment in the thread satisfies one forum member. It was posted by a Pantip user under the pseudonym *Tinthong*, criticizing the forum starter's approach in creating an original message. The analysis of this discourse is presented in the table below.

Discursive practices Intertextuality and socio-cultural practices	Is there the reproduction of a power relationship?	Is there the restructuring of a power relationship?	Is there the challenging of hegemony?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the macro level?	Is there the technique of using discourse at the micro level?
Economic context	-	-	-	-	-
Political context	-	-	-	-	-
Cultural context	-	-	-	-	-
Belief / Individual attitude Headline in the original message in Pantip's thread must be provided according to reality, rather than the exaggeration, interpretation, and notional ideas of the forum starter. Doing the latter is considered to be objectionable.	-	It is clear that the comment writer has criticised forum creator. The expression is strong and powerful and seems to control the action of the forum creator.	-	-	Comment consists of seven sentences in seven lines, but five of them raise an objection and discussion. However, politeness is also conveyed through the language used. The politeness strategy here is "Bald on Record" meaning that the relationship between communicators is asymmetrical.

5.16 THE USE OF DISCOURSE IN PANTIP'S THREADS

Turning now to this section, the finding from all of the analytical frameworks presented above will be encapsulated here in order to deliver an intelligible answer for research question one. The ways that the Pantip users manipulate their power in the forum can be seen by the use of discourse in the threads. This will be explained firstly by their use of intertextuality and socio-cultural practices, and then the use of the discursive practices will follow.

Intertextuality and socio-cultural practices

Economic, political, and cultural context

Of the fifteen discourses which were chosen for analysis, twelve embodied these contexts, of which one was economic and two were political. However, the cultural context made up the majority. Nine of them were found in Pantip's comments where the discourses associated with a wide range of topics: education, superstition, accident, and beauty care, for example.

The interesting result that emerged from the analysis is that four applications were found when Pantip's users expressed their views in the forum. In addition, these four applications were evenly employed in the comments selected for this study. The first application is the **“writer's experience”**, and it can be seen in the comments given by *Mhuio123* and *NO one see ME*, who provided their practical contact with the event discussed in the thread, and also by *Sieghart*, who presented his impression of private tutoring in Japan. The second is the **“writer's perception.”**

Pong&Ponnd had every confidence in the former prime minister of Thailand, while *Marupong* also showed his optimism in the capability of the Thai police force. Likewise, กระบี่เต่า (*Aged Sword*) revealed exclusive information through his generosity and consideration. “**Social value and convention**” are the third application that *Joechou*, น้ำออก (*Uncle Aod*), and *Nithar28* have conveyed in their comments on the Thai educational system, gender role, and medical treatment, respectively. Finally, “**rules and regulations**” became one of the common intertextualities in online forum when tax, which is a compulsory contribution to state revenue, was mentioned by *Parevath*; the authority of the Administrative Court that was introduced by เห็ดหอม (*Shiitake Mushroom*); and school requirements, as they were incorporated in *Darkheart*’s opinion.

Belief

Unlike the socio-cultural context, which is apparently from borrowing and transformation of another text made by Pantip users in order to construct a discussion in the forum, “belief” presents the comment writers’ original personal attitude. The single most striking observation to emerge from the analytical framework was that almost all of the discourses chosen for analysis in this research, that is to say, thirteen of fifteen comments, show very clearly the comment writers’ beliefs on the topic being discussed in the thread. The following table provides a summary of this finding. The data is ranked in the order of the number of forum members who gave the comment writer satisfied emoticons.

Table 5.1 Summary of Pantip users' beliefs found in the study

Pseudonym of comment writer	Number of satisfied emoticons	Belief
หล่อทุกอณูรูขุมขน (<i>Handsome through all parts of body particles</i>)	15	Knowledge is more important than capital in real estate investment.
<i>Patthara</i>	12	Women in sexy dresses may not be sexually attractive.
<i>Mhuio123</i>	9	Integrity is a necessity in trading.
เห็ดหอม (<i>Shiitake Mushroom</i>)	7	Both politicians and public are responsible for the uproar around the serial drama's cancellation.
<i>Joechou</i>	6	Educational system and school curriculum have to be reformed.
<i>Darkheart</i>	5	(1) Self-discipline and morality are more important than academic excellence. (2) Educational governing body is ineffective.
<i>Parevath</i>	4	Provincial Electricity Authority is ineffective.
<i>Sieghart</i>	4	Expressing views is everybody's right.
<i>Nithar28</i>	3	One should be cautious before believing in something.
<i>Marupong</i>	2	Police officers are not all bad, and the good ones are dependable.

Table 5.1 Summary of Pantip users' beliefs found in the study (continued)

Pseudonym of comment writer	Number of satisfied emoticons	Belief
<i>NO one see ME</i>	2	People are equal and must be treated equally.
น้าออด (<i>Uncle Aod</i>)	1	Women should obtain protection from men, and men should be punished for their carelessness.
<i>Tinthong</i>	1	Providing facts goes beyond everything in creating original message in Pantip.

Discursive practices

The reproduction of a power relationship

The use of this practice is modest. Only three results from the fifteen overall research samples have indicated the reproduction of power relationships. One of them was located in the cultural context of *Darkheart's* comment, which pointed out the power of the public schools' administration department in controlling students to have student-style short hair. Two other results were found in the ideologies of *Mhuio123* and น้าออด (*Uncle Aod*). *Mhuio123* referred to the rights of customers to make a complaint and to show a reaction to products and services with which they are dissatisfied. น้าออด (*Uncle Aod*) attempted to signal to his forum participants the commitment of the gender roles in Thai society; that is to say, the man performs a vital function in taking care of the woman.

The restructuring of a power relationship

Similarly to the previous practice, the restructuring of a power relationship is only used in a limited way. Only three comment writers, including *Sieghart*, *Darkheart* and *Tinthong*, introduced this practice into the conversation thread. In *Sieghart* and *Tinthong*'s discourses, the concept of the freedom of expression was embedded in their belief. However, the most striking observations to emerge from the analysis were that *Sieghart* stressed the equal rights of the ordinary people and the press in imparting information and ideas, regardless of the medium employed, whereas *Tinthong* exercised his right to communicate his opinions by criticising the forum starter using powerful language and trying to control the future actions of the forum starter also. In *Darkheart*'s discourse, the use of the cultural context also characterised the restructuring of a power relationship. Teachers with red-tinted hair and red manicures might be regarded as being inappropriate, but they have the power to punish students who have long hair and nails.

The challenging of hegemony

This finding is significant because there were six comment writers who showed this practice in their beliefs, as well as their applications of the economic, political, and cultural contexts. The table below summarises the results obtained from the analysis of the challenging of hegemony in Pantip's thread.

Table 5.2 Summary of Pantip users' challenging of hegemony found in the study

Pseudonym of comment writer	Location of the practice	Related institution	Theme of the challenge
<i>Parevath</i>	Economic context	Governor of Suratthani Province	Governor's policy on spending state revenue
เห็ดหอม (<i>Shiitake Mushroom</i>)	Political context	State agency	Public power through the power of the Administrative Court
<i>Joechou</i>	Cultural context and Comment writer's ideology	Ministry of Education	(1) Educational policy of reducing the student's workload (2) Teachers' abilities and teaching standards
<i>Patthara</i>	Comment writer's ideology	Entertainment media	The representation of pop-folk singer's sexy fashion sense
<i>Sieghart</i>	Comment writer's ideology	The press	Word choice in news reporting
<i>NO one see ME</i>	Comment writer's ideology	People in high social class	Unequal treatment of people from different social classes

Technique of using discourse at the macro and micro levels

Discourse at the macro level, which is the formal conformity to the social norm, was scarcely used as there were only two comment writers who applied this technique. น้ำออด (*Uncle Aod*) mentioned Article 291 of the Criminal Code of Thailand, proposing legal action against the male tourist who failed to protect his partner from harm. เห็ดหอม (*Shiitake Mushroom*) also encouraged the serial's drama producer to appeal formally to the Administrative Court for an investigation of the unjustified programme cancellation.

Discourse at the micro level, which is the level of the informal language with local meaning and coherence, was however, thoroughly used in Pantip. Almost all of the comment writers in this study applied this technique to convey their feelings in the forum. This type of discourse included the use of:

(1) Illocutionary acts which are “Expressive” and “Directive”: As explained in the methodology chapter, the “Expressive” consists in expressing the propositional attitudes of the speaker about a state of affairs, and the condition of this act is neutral. This can be applied to the comment in the thread in analysis 3, in which the writer reacted to the topic of the original message by explaining further about the concept of investment in the real estate business. For the “Directive”, the point of this act is in making an attempt to get the hearer to carry out the action. It is clear in analysis 10 that the comment writer has encouraged the producer to take legal action, if it is proven true that the cause of the television drama's banning was a government order.

(2) Strategies of politeness: As mentioned also in the methodology chapter, this refers to the way in which communicators attempt to avoid the risk of losing face. Two strategies were found in the study, including “Bald on record”²⁷ and “Positive politeness.” The first was found in analysis 15. The comment writer used a straightforward language that showed dominance over the thread starter. In the second, in analysis 5, the optimistic sense of the comment writer clearly represents positive politeness.

(3) Interrogative sentences were found in many threads; but instead of seeking for answers, they were aimed to evoke readers’ thought, such as that used by *Parevath* in analysis 2. In concern about the suitability of spending County budgets, this comment writer asked: “could the government declare a state of emergency!?...Whoever could let me know?” Furthermore, some writers, for example *Darkheart* in analysis 13, asked a question for the reason above and, at the same time, to try to find agreement from the other forum participants. *Tinthong*’s comment in analysis 15 consists of seven questions, yet five of them revealed his objection and these questions challenged discussion from the thread starter.

(4) Metaphor and rhetorical languages: This study indicates that different comment writers have applied different techniques to express views in the threads. In analysis 13, the phrase “look so funny” connotes a paradox, when a lady teacher with red-tinted hair and red nails performed as an inspector to ensure that students in her school had short hair and nails without colour. The juxtaposition of the words

²⁷ This terminology is used by Brown and Levinson (1987, cited in Orawan, 2003, p. 82).

“ordinary people” and “people with Doctor as a title” was found in analysis 9. It was used to show the writer’s criticism of the possibly unequal treatment of people with different social status in Thai society. More metaphorical and rhetorical language included a critical remark to evaluate the work of the Thai Governor in analysis 2; complaining about Thai teachers and their teaching methods in analysis 1; and the dislike shown for the representation of the Thai pop-folk singer in analysis 6.

(5) Words expressing insult and satire: This finding is a good example of the use of discourse at the micro level, since it shows how comment writers have applied informal language with local meaning to the discussion thread. These included:

- In analysis 1; the phrase “the more the students learn, the more stupid they are” is widely known to be ironic in the Thai context in regard to unsuccessful schooling.
- In analysis 4; “it serves you right” is often used sarcastically when someone does something wrong and deserves such results.
- In analysis 11; the writer applied the word “doctor” (in Thai “หมอ”) satirically to refer to a “masseur” who can provide a call-out service, while physicians are clearly unable to do this.
- In analysis 14; using words to describe an action of an animal in relation to a human is seen as a means by which to insult Thai people. Instead of writing “argue” and “challenge”, the writer used “bark” and “bite”. Other disrespectful remarks included: “be[ing] afraid of even Thaksin’s shadow”, “be[ing] beaten to a pulp” and “becoming black and blue.”

(6) Text-based emoticon: This tends to be one of the most common ways for Thais to express their feeling in online communication. In analysis 4, the symbol =_=" was employed to signify shame, boredom and despair.

(7) Drawing an image: It is obvious from this chapter that images are used frequently in news discussion, both by forum starters and participants. Most of the images provide extra information, and some are used as ornaments to make the text look more attractive. In analysis 7, the language used in the lower part of the comment appears to be confrontational. However, the drawing attached at the end, shows that the writer aims to tease, rather than to assault.

In conclusion, this chapter delivers the answer to research question one. The findings from the analysis of the discourses - which relate to fifteen of Pantip's comments that were chosen for this study - show that intertextuality, socio-cultural practices and the discursive practices are associated with online news discussion. In relation to intertextuality and socio-cultural practices, it was found that almost all of the comments encompassed an economic, political, and/or cultural context that was provided by the comment writers. The application of these contexts came from: (1) the writers' experiences, (2) the writers' perspectives, (3) societal values and conventions, and (4) national rules and regulations. The comment writers' personal beliefs are another interesting result that also emerged from this examination. Almost all of the comments in the study signified writers' beliefs, where the good ones would be supported by other forum participants by way of giving satisfied emoticons.

It can be said that this refers not only to individual belief, but also to a shared belief among Pantip users who were participating in that thread.

In relation to discursive practices, the reproduction and restructuring of a power relationship were used in a limited way. However, the challenging of hegemony is worth noting, because Thailand's ruling and dominant class, the state agencies, government officials, mass media, journalists, and very well-educated people, were criticised in the forum. The last element of this practice is the technique of using discourse at the macro and micro level. This observation shows that the former was scarcely employed, whereas the latter, which is the use of informal language to give local meaning so as to convey writers' feelings in a thread, was plentiful. This technique included the use of illocutionary acts, strategies of politeness, interrogative sentences, metaphors, text-based emoticons, and the drawing of images.

The next chapter will present the findings from the focus group discussions, which are the second method used in this research in order to investigate site users. Their reasons for participating in Pantip, their personal practices in creating their original messages, the use of netiquette in responding to other forum members, the role they play in relation to mainstream news media will be explained respectively.

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS OF THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the results obtained from the focus groups, which was the method used in this research to examine the content creators. There were eighteen Pantip users who participated in the discussion, and who also completed the pre-group questionnaires about their demographic information and their use of Pantip. This information is revealed in the first section of the chapter. The following sections will show the answers derived from the participants contributions in the focus group discussions, illustrated by verbatim excerpts. This chapter seeks to answer research questions two, three, and four.

6.1 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS AND THE USE OF THE WEBSITE

Age

The age range in the pre-group questionnaire was divided into four groups: 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, and 51-60 years old. Although 21-30 years old is one of the major age ranges among the people in the group, an interesting finding is that the majority of focus group participants are mature people. The data reveals that almost all of them (12 people) are over 31 years old.

Gender

It was found that there were more men than women who took part in this research. Indeed, the result here bears no relationship to the real population in the Pantip website. However, females are truly a minority group in the “*News Talk*” category. As already explained in the methodology chapter, this category was selected in order to recruit the research samples. Of fifty-two of the original messages that were chosen, only ten were posted by women. *Anemone2526* and *Big-jaw Person*, were two female users who finally participated in the focus groups, told the researcher that it tends to be difficult to invite a female involved in Pantip to be part of research. Even they had thought carefully before accepting this project’s invitation. *Anemone2526* phoned the researcher’s office in Bangkok to check on the existence of the project.

Domicile

The participants were equally split between those who are Bangkok residents and those who are provincials. Participants who are provincials came from all part of Thailand, including the far north cities like Chiang Mai, the southern parts of Thailand, places such as Nakornsrihammarat, and the central region.

Marital status

Of eighteen participants, more than half were single. Only six were married and one was separated or divorced.

Educational level

The most striking result to emerge from the demographic information is that almost all of the research participants are highly educated. Fifteen people had gained at least a Bachelor's degree. Doctoral degree holders are very uncommon among Thai citizens. However, two of them are seen in this study.

Employment status

The result indicates that almost all of the focus group participants work for income. Seven of them have worked for a business-related agency. Some are self-employed individuals in either incorporated or non-incorporated businesses, professional practice, or farms. Only one person works for the government, and another is a Master's degree student. Although occupation was not inquired about in the questionnaire, some of them revealed to the researcher that they were a journalist, university lecturer, doctor, taxi driver, computer specialist, and TV crew.

Income

What is interesting from the findings is that Pantip users are likely to be in the wealthier part of the Thai population. Using participants in this study as an example, ten people earned around 20,000 – 50,000 Thai Baht (equal to 400 – 1,000 Pounds Sterling) per month. This salary rate is considered to be very high. The others earned

10,000 – 20,000 Baht (200 – 400 Pounds Sterling), which is above the average monthly income for Thai citizens ²⁸.

Span and frequency of using Pantip

The majority of participants in this study have used Pantip for over 4 years. Two of them revealed in a focus group discussion that they had used it since the launch of this website in 1996. However, with respect to their frequency of entry, all of them access Pantip at least once every day, in order to read the news forum. Approximately 56% of the research participants join the debate in the threads several times a day. In addition, 44% of them post original messages, which means that they post new news several times a day, every day.

Duration of time spent on Pantip

When they were asked, fifteen focus group participants (83%) responded that they spent roughly 1-3 hours per entry. However, their access time on Pantip is apparently difficult to determine. Some prefer using the website in the afternoon, while some do not.

²⁸ Thailand's National Information Centre (National Statistical Office of Thailand, 2009) reported recently that the average monthly income of Thai citizens in 2009 was 7,149 Baht (approximately 144 Pounds Sterling). People in Bangkok's populations earn an average of 11,829 Baht (around 240 Pounds Sterling).

Self-representation on Pantip

Their use of a pseudonym was also asked of the participants, and simple content analysis was applied to analyse the response. The result shows that almost 70% of the names that research participants create and use in the forum derive from their real identity, such as their year of birth in the Thai Buddhist Era (e.g., *Anemone2526*), their region of origin (e.g., *Southern Guy*), their appearance (e.g., *Big-jaw Person*), and some part of their real name (e.g., *So Magawn*). Apart from these reasons, some pseudonyms were created after favourite characters in films (e.g., *My name is OZ* and *Obi-Wan Ben Kenobi*).

It is often claimed that computer-mediated communication encourages anonymity. The findings relating to Pantip users' self-representation supports this claim. Although it can be seen that some research participants reveal their identity by putting their own photo on the website, the percentage who do this is only 28%. The image types used in Pantip appeared to be diverse. In this sample, respondents preferred preserving their anonymity by representing themselves through the use of animal images, cartoons or character graphics, things and so on. However, five people who use their real image in Pantip indicated the importance of openness, honesty, and reliability. Conversely, those who have never used any images showed disinterest in online self-representation.

The next page will present the list of news media that Pantip users depend on for information. As explained in the methodology chapter, this question was asked in order to recruit journalists for the interviews. The table below shows the results from the highest to the lowest percentage of responses. News professionals in ten organisations at the top of this list were selected and invited to interview.

Table 6.1 News media from which focus group participants commonly take news to post in Pantip

<i>News media</i>	<i>Number of participants with percentage in parentheses</i>
Thairath	6 (11.1%)
Daily News	6 (11.1%)
Nation Broadcasting Corporation Public Co., Ltd.	6 (11.1%)
Matichon	5 (9.3%)
www.thairath.co.th	5 (9.3%)
www.matichon.co.th	4 (7.4%)
The Bangkok Entertainment Co., Ltd. (Channel 3)	4 (7.4%)
Thai News Network 24, True Visions Public Co., Ltd.	3 (5.6%)
Thai Public Broadcasting Service	3 (5.6%)
www.siamrath.co.th	2 (3.7%)
Khaosod	2 (3.7%)
Krungthepthurakij	2 (3.7%)
MCOT Public Co., Ltd. (Modern 9 TV)	1 (1.8%)
SMMonline	1 (1.8%)
www.sanook.com	1 (1.8%)
Post Today	1 (1.8%)
Matichon Sudsabda	1 (1.8%)
Thansetthakij	1 (1.8%)
Total	54 (100%)

The top ten of the news organisations in the table above are remarkable. It is not only a combination of the leading mainstream news organisations in Thailand, but also represents a wide range of news media. These include sensationalist mass-circulation dailies and quality newspapers, as well as commercial news channels and the public broadcasting service.

6.2 PANTIP.COM USERS' REASONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE FORUM

The focus group discussion began with investigation of their reasons for using Pantip. This was part of research question two, in which I asked: “why do the Internet forum users participate in the site?” The core areas covered in the guiding questions in the focus groups include Pantip users' media usage, as well as their value position, their aims and actions in using Pantip. The findings from these core areas are outlined below.

Media usage

Media usage was the first topic discussed in the focus groups. Although it was intended as an ice-breaker or warm up question, targeting all participants to make them relax and get to know each other, the result was interesting because it showed some of the perspectives of the Pantip users on Thailand's news media. In general, all of them regularly received news from all types of media; these were newspapers, radio, television, and websites. However, *Dr. Mooh*, who rejected reading sensationalist mass-circulation newspapers, observed that the front page is full of disturbing images and the stories are non-intellectual. *So Magawn*, who seldom watched news on television, pointed out that political news on TV was one-sided and biased. In addition, the citation from the news source was short and unclear. This view contrasted with what *23Grandeur* said. He revealed that he is a high school graduate, and it was important for him to gain knowledge through watching television around seven hours per day. The programmes included prime-time news and exotic scientific quiz shows.

As far as online media usage is concerned, all of the focus group participants agreed that the Internet was their major source of information. They said that online news was fresh and ‘anywhere-anytime’. The Internet provides a ‘self-selective’ function, meaning that they are able to search and filter for their preference or for a particular issue. In regard to Pantip, some participants remarked on the extensive benefits of this website. For example, *Dr. Mooh* clearly indicated the variety of ‘Rooms’ available on Pantip, enabling him to select only on what he preferred to read, such as the *Suanlumpini Room* (health issues) and the *Sinthorn Room* (financial issues). *Anemone2526* and *Uncle Leo* pointed out the instant interaction and two-way communication in the forum, which is sometimes impossible in the mainstream media. *JD300* acknowledged Pantip’s business model, which is non-commercially focused, particularly the advertisement-free environment in its *Wahkor Room* (scientific issues).

The most striking result to emerge from the focus group discussions on the benefits of Pantip was the agreement that it is an open forum where everyone can at least access and read information that is posted on the website. Although there are both positive and negative opinions, as well as useful and useless ideas on it, almost all of the research participants highlighted that seeing the different views and attitudes from both sides are the biggest advantages from reading Pantip. *Jesus2000* --=*AnThraX*-- stated that it is delightful to be able to obtain a variety of opinions from a variety of people. Sometimes there were both older and younger forum users sharing their ideas on one topic. *Phaitoon* and *My name is OZ*, who were news professionals, confirmed that they followed social trends on Pantip. They claimed that some threads were very valuable if the comments were given by specialists or by news originators. In addition,

they felt that because a Thai Population Identification Code was required during the process of registration for membership, this resulted in greater trust and a better quality of information on Pantip. Some focus group participants highlighted that Pantip is full of useful information. Just visiting the website and reading public opinion is one of the best ways to gain knowledge. They explained:

Pantip is so big. It's full of intellect, channels and responses. We don't have to wander and seek for them anywhere else. We just sit in front of our computer screen. It can make us prolong our thought forever. (Birdeyview, 2013).

If I find some important information, such as that from Pantip's 'Library Room,' I will put it in my own file. I have collected a lot of it because it is good knowledge. The issues about health are useful as well. Even the view point of news is also in my file, so that I can read it later. (Black Fox, 2013).

In the 'Wahkor Room' there are many adept scholars. When we raise a question, they not only view it, but will give us opinions as long as an essay. It's just like their own article, together with illustrations and translation of information from abroad. What I have heard is that there are some people gathering such information and publishing it as a pocket book. (JD300, 2013).

Furthermore, many participants revealed that Pantip was a good place to seek advice. Although engaged in a different focus group, both *Anemone2526* and *JD300* agreed that this is one of the benefits of using Pantip. While *Anemone2526* was keen on the recommendations on cosmetics and fashion, *JD300* used the feedback from what he had asked in the forum to prepare himself for press interviews or seminars. Two Pantip users provided excellent explanations of the role of Pantip as a public space:

Sometimes the voice of the ordinary people is overlooked. But when it is a trend spreading on Pantip, everyone has to listen to and pay full attention to it... I think Pantip makes one's voice louder.... One more thing, I can see that when a news reporter claims he got the news from a renowned website, it's apparent that even a reporter is also interested in the social trends on Pantip. Then, Pantip seems to be a venue where people from the two sides can meet. (Oriental Skyline, 2013).

The shouts on Pantip are not shouted from building roofs, but from people in the room, and others like to listen to them. Those shouts are fresh and updated too. (Birdeyview, 2013).

Notwithstanding that it is an open forum containing a considerable human association, this attribute can also become a disadvantage of Pantip. This finding is worth mentioning although, in fact, there were only two of eighteen research participants who talked about it. *Phaitoon* commented that the current social and political divide in Thailand produces a huge amount of propaganda, particularly in Pantip's *Ratchadamnoen Room*, where users use it to discredit the opposition. In a neutral person, like him, online activism in Pantip destroys his mood in reading about political matters and diminishes the quality of the forum in general. *Jesus2000--=AnThraX=--* similarly indicated this problem, but focused on one-sided accounts. Some stories posted on Pantip as well as reviews about products and services were not all fact. Many were created to serve the writer's own benefit and for business-based public relations (PR). He suggested, therefore, that a high level of judgment and discretion must be applied when reading Pantip.

Value position

The value position of Pantip users was explored when focus group participants were asked about their reasons for posting and discussing news in the forum. The responses can be categorised into two main themes, which were: (1) transforming the society by promoting wisdom and morality, and (2) counterbalancing the information in the mainstream media.

More than half of all respondents mentioned a desire to transform society by promoting wisdom and morality. In focusing on wisdom, *Oriental Skyline*, *Japan35*, and *JD300* stressed the importance of specific know-how and thought they could use their expertise to increase what was available on Pantip. *Japan35* said that he had a background in agricultural education. What he wished to see was an improvement in Thai farming. *JD300*, a biologist and lecturer, criticised that Thai politics would not have been as chaotic as it is today if everyone had judged it scientifically. As a scientist, as well as a Pantip user, *JD300* believed he could advance Thai peoples' way of thinking.

In focusing on morality, *Jesus2000*--=*AnThraX*--, *So Magawn*, *Birdeyevuew*, *Black Fox*, and *Uncle Leo* stated that a moral society was their ambition. *Birdeyevuew* felt that people harm each other by using the media, and both media and audiences are victimized. *So Magawn*, an ICT specialist, remarked that it is uncommon to see technology news that supports the customers' benefit or presents information on the customer's side. Most of the news was PR news targeting the distribution of products with an identical news body under distinct headlines in the different news outlets.

As a consequence, *Birdeyview* and *So Magawn* positioned themselves as debaters by adjusting or adding information they knew well to Pantip. *Uncle Leo* and *Black Fox* wished to see a better Thai society. With respect to the role of the media, *Black Fox* said:

I would like to wake up some trends to goodness so that they exist in Thai society. Currently, most of the media often put a spin on the stories they write, publish only something bad, full of sexual and violent stories. Good news is patched on a little space at the edges of the paper. On the other hand, bad news is also published on the large-letter headlines. This point seems to be psychologically accumulated and makes people think and behave pessimistically. Some characters in Thai drama on TV lead to the news rewriters and their wording in the news, for example, politicians slap each other to grasp power. I would like to have the media change their behavior.... One day, when I wake up in the morning, I want to see the newspapers publish 'today there is no violence in our country.'
(Black Fox, 2013).

Pantip users' value the position in regard to the counterbalancing of the information in the mainstream media, which means that they wished to spotlight a story that has been overlooked by journalists. Although news posted in the forum was taken from the papers and from websites, six participants agreed that they selected only the stories that did not appear in prime locations, such as an inner page or a small column. The illustration of this value position can be seen in what some of the participants did. For example, *Southern Guy* mainly posted news that was related to his hometown. He explained in the focus group that stories from southern Thailand were very limited in the media scene. *Anemone2526* supported this point. However, instead of posting news about the north, where she was born and raised, *Anemone2526* normally chose social issues from Asian countries to circulate in Pantip. She simply explained to the group that these issues were scarce in Thai media. Similar reasons were expressed by *Obi-Wan Ben Kenobi*, *JD300*, *Dr. Mooh*, and *Destined by Hand*. Yet those stories posted in the forum were

stories associated with their personal interests, including physics and astronomy (*JD300*), public health (*Dr. Mooh*). and the Premier League (*Destined by Hand*). *Obi-Wan Ben Kenobi*, who favours USA basketball, took his argument further, pointing out that some sports, such as basketball, were not popular with Thais. This resulted in journalists' disregard for that sport, even providing incorrect information and wrong names for players, for example. If this situation continued, *Obi-Wan Ben Kenobi* believed that it would have an effect on the news organisation because it would lose credibility. It would also cause a downturn in the popularity of such sports in Thai society.

Aims and actions

This research points out that aims and actions are parts of the value position. The correlation between them is interesting, because it illustrates research participants' determination in taking part in Pantip. Although their desires are different, their activities in the forum are similar. The results here present only four Pantip users, whose aims and actions emerged as distinctive, including: *So Magawn*, *Black Fox*, *Japan35*, and *Dr. Mooh*.

For *So Magawn*, in order to achieve his aim to support the customers' side and to weaken the domination of PR news in the mainstream media, his actions in Pantip were to provide information from various sources in his original messages in the forum. *So Magawn* explained that this was not his main activity in Pantip when he began to use the site. On the contrary, it appeared later when he read more and gained more facts, and discovered that a story coming from only one medium was not dependable. Additionally,

he found that some IT companies failed to fulfill what they had promised customers. As a result, if it was pertinent, *So Magawn* would also summarise on Pantip what an IT executive had previously said. His actions in integrating news from different sources and informants into one forum is undertaken not only to secure benefit for product users, some of whom are Pantip readers, but this action is also undertaken to clarify that he is impartial, a non-partisan Pantip user.

Black Fox, as previously noted, was worried about the psychological effects on Thai society that might arise from daily violent news on the newspapers' front pages. The study found that spreading good news in Pantip is, therefore, his aim. He argued in the focus group that social tension could be relieved by providing people with positive news. To this end, what *Black Fox* did was to post only the 'feel-good' stories that he took from the mainstream media for discussion in the forum. These feel-good stories mainly represented meritorious issues, such as a taxi driver returning lost property to a passenger and a Thai student winning an award from an international competition.²⁹

In regard to *Japan35*, who holds a Bachelor's degree in agricultural science and who wished to see the development of Thai farming, it is obvious from analysis that his aim was to give help and suggestions to farmers. Actually, some other research participants, for example, *Birdeyview* and *Jesus2000--=AnThraX=--*, also mentioned

²⁹ Surprisingly, this study found that it was *Black Fox* who created the original message in Pantip regarding an overseas Thai university student claiming herself that she had achieved a special award from France's Cannes International Film Festival. This news, very well-known in Thai as อุ่มเมืองคานส์ (*Aum at Cannes*), was one of the most scandalous incidents in the Thai media in 2009, when *Black Fox* took it from a mainstream source, aiming to spread the success of this student in Pantip. However, other Pantip users investigated the details deeply, and discovered that it was a fake story.

the activity of providing suggestions in threads as helpful action. However, *Japan35* went on to show how his aims worked on his actions. He said that despite there being plenty of support from the government, including planting strategy, advice, and financial resources, the problem was that farmers did not know about that support. So, his action was to post these types of information in Pantip, even though the online forum might not be accessible to all Thai farmers. *Japan35* argued in the focus group that there were many levels of agriculturalists. His message was what he thought would be interesting and useful for those who can access the Internet. *Japan35*'s action was similar to that of *Dr. Mooh*. However, instead of agricultural issues, *Dr. Mooh* encouraged public health, and he aimed to change human behaviour by combining fact, opinion and his medical knowledge in Pantip. He said he was content to do this because only a small amount of his time and energy were employed, but it was worthwhile when people's knowledge of health issues was enhanced.

Medical news about innovative beauty treatments, the context is only about a few items, such as Botox, Collagen and Glutathione, repeatedly. The trends are a hit for a few days and then they all fade away. I think that the stories of this sort may be kept in the form of scholastic knowledge in a store, and published again when some problems exist. It may help the news recipients to change their excessively credulous belief in beauty products. Speaking straightforwardly, I have not invested anything, but have wasted some energy and time. It is, worth it anyway. (Dr. Mooh, 2013).

6.3 PANTIP.COM USERS' PRACTICES IN NEWS DISCUSSIONS

The next investigation focused on Pantip users' practices in news discussions. Research question three is: "What are the practices and netiquettes performed in the debate, and in responding to the coverage which the Internet forum users have taken from mainstream news media?" The core areas covered in the guiding questions in the focus group include Pantip users' posting practices, skills and knowledge, as well as online ethics and netiquette. The finding from these core areas are as follows:

Posting practices

The results obtained from a preliminary analysis of Pantip users' posting practices are illustrated in Figure 6.1. "Posting practices" indicates the process of presenting news stories which focus group participants have taken from the mainstream media into the forum. This process emerges as being formed from three sequential steps that include issue selection, original message creation, and feedback recognition. The details of each step are explained beneath Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1 The process of posting news in Pantip.com



Issue selection

Issue selection is the first step in presenting news to the forum. The majority of research participants responded that the criteria used in order to decide on what should be posted online was simply that the stories were associated with their personal interest. These stories included “hard news stories”, such as financial issues (*Oriental Skyline*) and politics (*Khmer Su-rin* and *Big-jaw Person*), “soft news stories”, such as celebrity (*My name is OZ*) and English football (*Destined by Hand*). This finding is somewhat interrelated to the points already discussed in regard to research question two. However, some Pantip users gave more reasons for their choice. *JD300* admitted he occasionally posted news in the forum, but if he decided to do so, then his story must gain a high rate of debate, resulting in being ranked as Pantip’s best topic of the day. This finding indicated that Pantip is also used for self-aggrandizement. *Anemone2526*, *Southern Guy*, *Dr. Mooh*, and *Phaitoon* did not expect such high impact. They normally selected the so-called ‘forgotten issues’ which needed the limelight. These issues would then receive public attention, and the critique in the conversation threads would eventually become the Pantip audience’s knowledge.

Interestingly, the analysis found that criticism of the audience is very influential and it is one of the main factors that cause some of the Pantip users to carefully select the issues about which they want to post online. *Oriental Skyline*, *23Grandeur*, and *So Magawn* stressed this point and observed that it was a prolonged process. *Oriental Skyline* took his argument further in comparing soft issues and hot issues. For soft financial issues, such as stock market and investing news, the story selection

was simple. On the contrary, it would be more complex if he decided to pick the hot issues, namely, a new state policy on economics. The process involved researching and gathering information, as well as understanding the background problem. *Oriental Skyline* explained that these tasks had to be done during this step in order to prepare for the debate and conflicting viewpoints. He said:

The hot stories must be filtered again and again. I ask myself first if there is full information, or have I enough information to respond, to say what the theory is. If I can't find a good answer, I will evade the question. I won't play with such points. However, if I want to participate, I will have to keep in mind that I may have to accept the consequent feedback, which maybe positive or negative. (Oriental Skyline, 2013).

Likewise, *23Grandeur* indicated the impact of feedback on issue selection. He said:

The news to be chosen to be put into the forum must have the full information and be ready to answer any questions right away. It must be thought about: if there is anyone asking a question, what answer can we give them. We must gather all the information first. I believe there are some people in Pantip who follow me. I must have conclusions and can answer their questions. (23Grandeur, 2013).

The mode of processing information that is carried out by *Oriental Skyline* and *23Grandeur* is similar to that carried out by *So Magawn*. He stated that Pantip users were allowed to create four original messages per day. As a result of this limitation, he selected only strong issues, which were not necessarily fresh, but which should be clear and neutral ones. In addition, negative feedback from readers was inevitable. So, supporting facts from other sources and relevant information collected in the past would be brought to supplement the current story. He, and *23Grandeur* too, explained that this is the effective way to defend oneself from abrasive criticism. Apart from

these practices, expressed by *Oriental Skyline* and *So Magawn*, *Southern Guy* emphasized a reliable source. He mainly selected news from the Internet, but those presented in websites to target teenage audiences, such as Sanook.com, Kapook.com, and Teenee.com, were definitely excluded. *Black Fox* and *Birdeyevue* followed this practice also, but they relied on multiple news sources. What they normally did was to compare the same story across different media. The news from radio would be cross-checked with that on the Internet, or from one newspaper with the others. The most explicit, or the more accurate ones, would be chosen to be circulated in Pantip.

Original message creation


When all of the focus group participants had decided on their story following the process of selection, then the creation of the original message in Pantip was the second step. This step is related to signing-in on the website with the user's pseudonym and password, and transferring the data from mainstream media to the online forum. Original message creation can be classified, on the basis of practice, into three themes: borrowing, editing, and adding. '*Borrowing*' refers to the reproduction of the information in Pantip as it appeared in the original source. From the researcher's personal observation, borrowing news is likely to be the most common practice in the News Talk category in this website. The reason for borrowing is evident as *Oriental Skyline* explained that it was important for readers that the news was presented in full. He referred to his experience as an illustration that it was bothersome to read an incomplete story. Besides, some thread starters intended to adjust information for misleading purpose. In his opinion, borrowing was a good convention.

So Magawn challenged *Oriental Skyline*'s thought. He remarked that news stories from mainstream media were prolix. '*Editing*' was thus his main practice in transferring information into Pantip. He described his activity through the process; that is, firstly, the news story was read through and only the main ideas were cut out; secondly, they were pasted on the Pantip page together with a reference or hyperlink to the news' origin, making his post valued. In terms of adjusting information, *So Magawn* noted that it was acceptable, on the condition that it was done for public benefit; as he did in IT news. *Anemone2526* also read original news throughout and later edited it. However, the major purpose was to find and correct the misspelled words written by the journalist. She told the focus group that formerly she was a thread starter who borrowed news from mainstream media without proof-reading it. This resulted in receiving painful comments from Pantip readers about what she had disregarded.

With respect to editing news presented in mainstream media, particularly in the newspapers, *Destined by Hand* and *Black Fox* also performed this duty. Both of them noticed that the words used in news were relatively strong. For sports news, *Destined by Hand* stated that the news body was composed of fervent language. In his transfer process, therefore, those violent words would be changed into softer ones. For social news, *Black Fox* commented on the headlines. Many of them used eye-catching vocabulary or they sometimes presented a surprising point which was irrelevant to the detail in the main body. As a result of this defect, which might lead to misconceptions in the audience, *Black Fox* would carefully read the original story and to rewrite it in Pantip. In addition, issues related to the political activities of the government and those of the opposition party were very sensitive topics in

Thai society, at that time. The headline in *Black Fox*'s message would therefore be written clearly in a way that defended his news story from accusations that it had no connection to either the political situation or a political person. *23Grandeur* correspondingly referred to writing practice and confirmed that it is a useful process. Although almost all of his original messages in Pantip were not news taken from the media but were incidents he had found himself, he discovered that editing was very important in disseminating information. He told the focus group that he had only achieved a high school certificate, so writing was his self-training process because he could learn how to write accurately and comment wisely.

'Adding' was one of the Pantip users' practices in the process of creating original message. This practice can be defined by what some participants did in the forum. For example, *Dr. Mooh* usually added extra information derived from his medical experience and the academic sources in his original messages in order to extend the readers' knowledge. This information is also clear to the readers because a personal pronoun was used. *Obi-Wan Ben Kenobi* and *23Grandeur* enthusiastically attached images and video clips in the forum to attract readers' attention. What is more, *23Grandeur*, *Uncle Leo* and *Destined by Hand* supported each others' ideas, explaining that they inserted "**Thai text-based emoticons**" ³⁰ into messages, aiming to reduce reader's anger when strong opinions were expressed.

³⁰ For example, similarly to giggle,  represents a light, silly, and repeated laugh, showing amusement, nervousness or embarrassment. This is a popular way in online communication for Thai people when speakers aim to show that the issues discussed or mentioned are not to be taken seriously, or it can mean: "just kidding."

Regarding the reasons for adding news sources in messages, the responses from focus group participants can be summarised into three possible reasons. First of all, it is a way to pay respect and show recognition to the media who introduced that news item. *Oriental Skyline*, *Obi-Wan Ben Kenobi*, *Jesus2000--=AnThraX=--* and *Dr. Mooh* pointed to this reason. Secondly, it is a way to show the information is authoritative. *Birdeyevuew*, *Black Fox*, and *JD300* revealed that providing the news' origin can also underline the trustworthiness of their message, as it told the readers that the story was taken from a reliable outlet. *Japan35* additionally noted that readers would have the opportunity to search for more details from the medium of origin if the reference and the hyperlink were included in the forum. Lastly, *Southern Guy*, *My name is OZ*, and *JD300* told that they used to be blamed by the Pantip audience for providing news without its source. Consequently, from their experience, adding the news source is nothing other than a thing that is requested. Moreover, according to *My name is OZ*, it has become a practice when creating a message in Pantip. Although these respondents perceived that adding the news's source was just a typical convention when posting an original message, it is considered to be good journalistic practice that Pantip users have learnt while participating in the forum.

Feedback recognition

The last step when posting news in Pantip is the feedback recognition, which refers to the way that the focus group participants react to their audience after the message has been published online. The findings from the analysis show that, generally, the majority returned to their page in one to three hours, and came back again later

the next day to see how the audience think and feel about that topic. For *Black Fox*, useful comments in the debate threads would be compiled and saved on a computer. For others, an acknowledgement would be expressed and the responses would be provided to the questions asked in the threads. *Oriental Skyline* and *Dr. Mooh* tried to show how the queries from the audience are meaningful by explaining that:

Some topics are interesting for many people. There are so many questions. Or maybe they misunderstood the points. I have to work hard on such a topic. I have to search for some more information so as to answer and explain. Maybe there is so much information and it takes me 2-3 hours to gather. The word length is similar to what can be seen on 2 pages of A4 paper. Maybe there is someone who asks questions a week later.... I think I have to be responsible for the readers as well. When they ask, I have to answer. Maybe I have to send my message to the questioners on Pantip through their inboxes to tell them I have answered their questions. (Oriental Skyline, 2013).

There are two types of feedback, including the expressing of opinions about whether they like or don't like, and the other is asking a question. I think one asking a question is, at the least, a person who is eager for knowledge. I myself am eager to spread my knowledge, then we can both meet in the conversation. (Dr. Mooh, 2013).

Feedback recognition is not only made up of text-based communication. Some Pantip users disclosed that giving a reply to all of the participants in the forum is time-consuming. Pantip's emoticons can therefore be applicable during this step. This emoticon appears in six designs, representing six emotions; including being satisfied, to die laughing, to be enamoured, to be tearful, to be full of dread, and to be surprised. It enables users to express their feelings on a specific comment and this will be embedded in the thread with the pseudonym of the person using it. *Anemone2526*, *Black Fox*, *Destined by Hand*, and *Big-jaw Person* remarked that

this tool could not only save them time, but it could also be a way to show the audience the recognition of the forum creator. The heart-shaped emoticon showing satisfaction was used to encourage forum participants who gave valuable feedback.

Skills and knowledge

The skills and knowledge of Pantip users are among the most important factors for posting practice, because it leads to the quality of information in the forum. From the analysis, the essential skills employed in creating the original message are comprised of language skills. Many focus group participants observed that a good use of the Thai language was a basic principle. As mentioned previously, *23Grandeur* underlined the importance of writing skills. However, *Anemone2526* and *So Magawn* argued further that spelling errors in the forum would be strongly criticised by the audience. *Birdeyview* highlighted reading skills. He said quick reading was essential in the process of gathering and selecting a news story. Moreover, for *JD300* and *Obi-Wan Ben Kenobi* who depended mostly on up-to-date information from foreign sources, a high level of English proficiency is necessary. Relevant skills included translation and researching. *JD300* proved that some scientific information was unavailable in Thai, and it was sometimes very difficult to think of the English word through a word search in the Web search engines. This situation occurred when he needed to contest a Thai superstition by providing the scientific evidence from another country on Pantip.

As far as research skills and knowledge in using online sources of information are concerned, Google and YouTube seem to be the top Web search engines for all of the focus group participants. *JD300* suggested that for some topics, such as a manned mission to the moon, video clips are a better representation of an argument than text. For other Pantip users, namely, *Anemone2526*, *Oriental Skyline*, *Birdeyevview*, *Black Fox*, and *Dr. Mooh*, searching for and comparing information from the various online sources is crucial. This action also combines skills of critical thinking and information analysis, because only the most precise news story will be chosen. Moreover, *Obi-Wan Ben Kenobi* took this opportunity to learn how different media present news in different styles. Interestingly *Anemone2526* looked particularly for news that was accompanied with images, whereas *Pomchue OZ* stressed that the image attached must be real and must actually correspond to the details in the story.

Proficiency in researching information online is obviously connected to computer skills. From the researcher's personal observation in the focus group discussion, some participants referred to the trouble of copying text from online news websites, and someone in the group explained the technique for doing this. This interaction could be seen between *Birdeyevview* and *Black Fox*; and *Japan35* and *Jesus2000 --=AnThraX=--*. However, other computer skills involved in the process of posting news in Pantip include media production. *JD300* pointed out that long video clips downloaded from YouTube would be edited before they were presented in the forum. To this end, the knowledge of the relevant computer software was applied. *Anemone2526* and *Southern Guy* were keen to attract the audience's attention by integrating an image into their message.

Obi-Wan Ben Kenobi spent a lot of time, especially in creating characters, graphics or text effects for the same reason. As a result of this action, creativity skills were essential.

Online ethics and netiquette

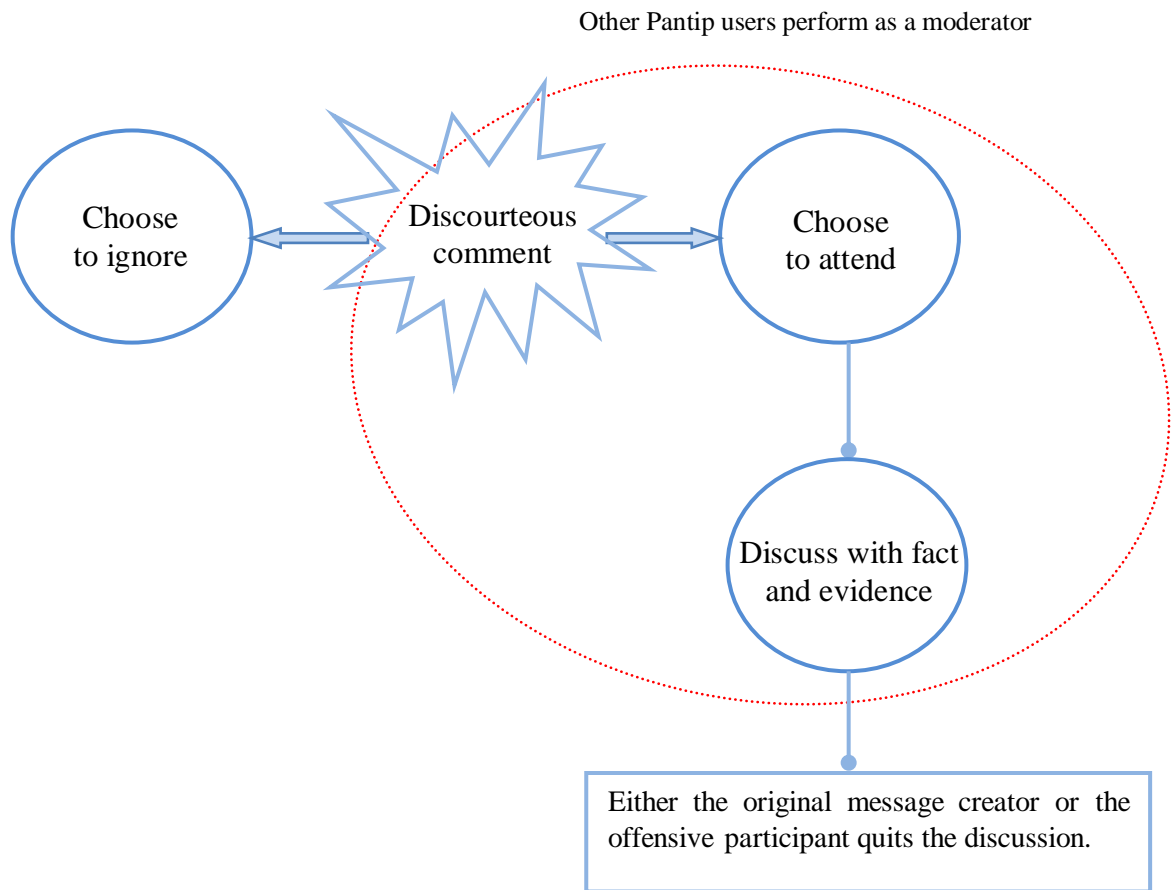
In this study, online ethics are the moral values held by Pantip users when an original message is created in the forum. The findings are divergent; that is to say, the responses from the research participants cannot be grouped under a theme. Even so, it is striking because it implies that there seem to be many online ethics which are subject to individual conscience. The results are explained below:

Anemone2526's correct conduct was to never insert a nude picture into Pantip, or an unclothed male image or a female in a two-piece swimsuit. She commented that disseminating such an image could be considered as a way of bullying others, particularly women. *My name is OZ*, as a male entertainment reporter, likewise follows this rule. Although celebrity photo scandals with candid camera shots attract a lot of human interest in both the mainstream and online media, he has never published such photos, because he counts it an abuse. *23Grandeur* and *Uncle Leo* protected the human rights of a person in the news that is introduced by them, as a so-called citizen reporter, by blurring the face of the person in the photos. *23Grandeur* rationally explained that permission from that person had not yet been asked for. Moreover, particularly photos of children could possibly be misused by someone else when they appear on the Internet. *Oriental Skyline* tried not to present sensational news and comment in the forum. *Jesus2000* --=*AnThraX*-- denied self-centred mannerism in listening to public ideas, rather than taking part in the debate in order to dominate

his audience. *Dr. Mooh* took responsibility for all of his messages and opinions posted in Pantip, and said it is honorable to speak and behave to people in the same way in either face-to-face communication or in a virtual situation.

With regard to netiquette, this study focuses on the way that Pantip users communicate with each other in the forum, particularly the way they conduct themselves in regard to opposite views and to discourteous participants. Figure 6.2 presents the overview of the findings here, and we can see there are two options employed in order to interact with offensive individuals. If the “attending” option is chosen, then the discussion emerges, and it continues until either the original message creator or the offensive participant quits the forum. However, other users who also take part in the debate threads play an important role as moderators. The findings on netiquette in Pantip will be explained thoroughly after the diagram.

Figure 6.2 The overview of Pantip users' interaction in the debate threads



Two types of characters were found in discourteous Pantip users, according to the research respondents' experience. The first type is the egotist, who has stubborn and aggressive online behaviour. Phaitoon called this person a 'keyboard hooligan' who simply sits in front of his/her computer, in a safe space and with a hidden identity, but who expresses an attitude of self-conceited arrogance with an exaggerated sense of his/her self-importance in the forum. *Destined by Hand* exemplified this person as 'biting endlessly', meaning that revenge will never stop if he or she is attacked by someone in the discussion. The second type is a person who presumably has

a psychological disorder. Some research participants remarked that this type of Pantip user has a ‘mental illness’ and has a problem with everyone in the forum (*Black Fox*); s/he just comes to Pantip to show off his/her power, ability, or something in the conversation threads (*Dr. Mooh*); is bizarre, insane, and s/he prefers to be criticised badly by others (*My name is OZ*).

As a consequence, one of the netiquettes applied to the online forum is to ignore discourteous participants and absurd comments. Almost everyone in the focus groups pointed out that there was no reason to communicate with these people. Some respondents, for example, *Anemone2526*, *Khmer Su-rin*, *Japan35*, *Uncle Leo*, and *Phaitoon*, accepted that it is a personal liberty to express an opinion. Pantip is a place for public voices and where users can gain knowledge by observing public views, although strong opinions have caused severe conflict in the political forum in *Ratchadamnoen Room* and in religious topics in *Sassana Room* where *Oriental Skyline* and *Big-jaw Person* avoided joining the debate. Three respondents applied insight from Buddhism to pacify irritation from offensive feedback.

‘If we walk out and see a pile of dog dung, what shall we do?’ Everyone would give the same answer: ‘Hop over it.’ Buddhist monks keep teaching us that any vulgarian who tries to find fault and to fight with us are considered like the pile of dog dung, which we can see and know. Then why do we have to be concerned with them? I have a choice. So, I have chosen not to be concerned with them. (Dr. Mooh, 2013).

In Pantip there are people from thousands of families. Sometimes we meet wayward guys giving their strange controversial opinions. I have to keep calm and restrain myself. I have to think that there are such wayward guys in our society too, and I should be prepared to cope with them. (JD300, 2013).

Sometimes I saw the comments in which people fought each other violently. Once I had read it, my perception was also widened in the way that I had to ignore it. I have learnt that our society is comprised of people like this. But I just wonder why those people keep devastating others in such a mad way. (Anemone2526, 2013).

Seven research participants revealed that Pantip forum users who entered discussion giving facts and proposing a rational commentary would be ignored, even though the tone of argument was offensive. *Oriental Skyline*, *So Magawn*, and *Jesus2000 --=AnThraX=--* stated that for those who came with corrupt ideas that aimed to discredit information in the original message would have their posts contested with additional evidences. *Obi-Wan Ben Kenobi* proved that providing more materials in the debate thread is his personal tactic, and it is an effective way to deal with these people. *23Grandeur* stressed the importance of facts, although an argument with robust language is sometimes irresistible when the heat of such a discussion reaches its peak. Yet, he was sure that fact could help him to win a Court case if he were being sued by his competitor. *23Grandeur* and *Birdeyevview* are similar regarding wrangles with other Pantip users. *Birdeyevview* observed that political issues in *Rachadamnoen Room* are turbulent, but for him, nothing is taken seriously unless it is backed by fact. *My name is OZ* was the only focus group participant who noted reconciliation. He said that the longer the dispute, the higher the level of conflict. His netiquette attempts to soothe the angry discussants in the forum in which his original message is a topic.

Three circumstances emerge as a result of an argument with a discourteous person with additional facts and details of news story in the debate threads. First, either the offensive participant or the original message creator quits the discussion. The former ceases the conversation in a case where s/he must surrender to powerful evidence. The latter discontinues an argument because the opponent is very aggressive and disrespectful to logical thinking. *Birdeyview* took his maturity into account, as did *Uncle Leo*, who also noted it was unnecessary to waste time on absurdity. *JD300* and *Destined by Hand* straightforwardly told his opponent that all of the attitudes were incompatible, and then he decided to quit the discussion. Nevertheless, the second circumstance that is connected to leaving the forum was informing Pantip's webmaster about the problem.

All registered Pantip users are allowed to report offensive comment in the debate thread and also a defective original message in the forum to the webmaster. By clicking on the bin icon, shown at the top-right corner of each message box, or by writing formally to the page 'contact Pantip', the webmaster would recognise the problem, and ultimately delete the message. *Destined by Hand* and *Japan35* revealed that they had experience in using this tool, but only on exceptional occasions. The third circumstance, in terms of dealing with discourteous Pantip users, is the power of public censorship. *Oriental Skyline*, *So Magawn*, *JD300*, and *Big-jaw Person* showed that if the original message creator presents a news story with positive intention, useful information and a valid viewpoint, then s/he will be supported by the audience, who will also perform as moderator in the forum. Strikingly, *Black Fox* and *My name is OZ* made a connection between these roles of the Pantip users and

the power of public censorship. In relation to the Internet troll and the way that the online community is policed for online harassment, they pointed out that:

News I had posted, suppose there were 30 people taking part in giving opinions, everyone would keep control of the main context and would criticize each other. If any opinion seemed to be very aggressive, for example, the 5th one, was vanished from the conversation thread, then I would immediately know that such opinion had been reported by some of the participants in the forum to the webmaster, asking him/her to take it out. It can be said that the online society manages itself completely. If you want to be in the Pantip society, you have to behave well. If you keep creating trouble, with no shame, you will be unable to stay in this society. (Black Fox, 2013).

Pantip is a place where everyone can express opinions, but, it has the limitation that we do not know who is in this place. It is difficult to control it actually, because there are both geniuses and blockheads. But, there is an eminent practice by means of which all participants keep an eye on one another. I think it is impossible for Pantip's administrator to filter all of the information in every opinion all of the time. We, Pantip users, have to patrol ourselves. (My name is OZ, 2013).

6.4 PANTIP.COM USERS' PERSPECTIVES

For the research question: "What are the roles that Internet forum users have played for mainstream news media?," the core areas covered in the guiding questions in the focus groups include Pantip users' perspectives on three subjects; these are Thai mainstream news media, their roles, and their identities. The findings relating to these core areas are explained below.

The perspectives of Pantip.com users on Thai mainstream news media

The overall response was very negative. All of the research participants pointed out several defects in Thailand's news media and these result in the poor quality of information. *So Magawn*, *Japan35*, *Khmer Su-rin*, and *Phaitoon* clearly understood that news organisations are established for commercial purposes. However, they disagreed with the business model, which becomes a major factor that leads reporters to a loss of freedom in reporting a negative image of the news media's sponsors. Additionally, because profitability is valued as a part of success, the news industry circulates the story that the media need to sell, rather than the news that people need to know. Three research participants claimed this. *Oriental Skyline* found some reportage was overstated. The incident that he directly experienced was not as severe as had been reported by media. *JD300* normally followed news from the various TV channels at the same time, and he found that most of the media presented a news story in a similar way. He believed there were many events that were discarded and that journalists selected only the dramatic ones, to attract the audience's attention. *Jesus2000* --=*AnThraX*-- supported *JD300*'s view and argued that media had done so due to the fact that it causes more commercials in news programme. This is a motive for business survival.

Other responses from research participants revealed journalists' failure in their work. Different Pantip users pointed to different perspectives. While *My name is OZ* commented that entertainment news and celebrity gossip are hastily presented without checking the facts, *So Magawn* observed that IT news in broadcast media is belated and

only based on information provided by IT product executives. *Japan35* often found that agricultural events that were publicised in newspapers were almost out of date. *Dr. Mooh* noted that some journalists are incautious and bigoted. An incident was reported that was one sided, since it depended on the detail from only one informant. *Oriental Skyline*, *Black Fox*, *Khmer Su-rin*, and *Big-jaw Person* agreed on news media's partiality, particularly in political issues. Even so, *Oriental Skyline* perceived that journalists are like all other human beings and are unable to do everything flawlessly. *Black Fox* said it was not journalists themselves, but the editorial process that caused headline news and the papers' front pages to be full of unpleasant stories.

The perspectives of Pantip.com users on their role

In the focus group discussions, the researcher tried to use the word "power" to refer to the role Pantip users have in relation to mainstream news media and Thai society in general. However, none of the research respondents noticeably indicated this point. Yet, *Phaitoon's* view is a good representation of the role that Pantip users have played in Thai society. Instead of making a connection between the use of Pantip and the way power is operated, he preferred commenting on the advantages of posting news on the forum and promoting widespread awareness of such a story. He said:

News I have posted onto Pantip are not anything about power, in my opinion. In fact, I just don't know where I should present them. Once I posted them onto Pantip, there was a lot of feedback from a great number of readers. I would rather call it 'advantage' than 'power', because I can't present them anywhere else other than Pantip... Especially if it is a good story, then it can help to change the society. People are likely to forward it to others, from one to two, from two to three, until it can be heard by the mainstream media. (Phaitoon, 2013).

Further analysis also showed that the majority of respondents believed in the power of the website itself. With respect to Pantip, as one of the most popular online public places in Thailand where people can share stories and ideas, the advantage of posting news on Pantip can be seen in different issues, according to the perspectives of each research participant. These advantages reflect the power of the Thai internet forum, as well as the power of the people using it, including;

- Pantip consists of users from different walks of life and a wide range of educational backgrounds. As a result, news and criticism posted on it can enlarge the knowledge of journalist on a particular story (*Oriental Skyline*). Moreover, some ideas from Pantip users are useful for journalists, because they provide a new source of information or an indication for the follow-up story (*Black Fox*, and *My name is OZ*).

- Pantip is an open forum that allows its users to tell society the truth in times of crisis such as Thailand's 2009 political turmoil (*JD300*). This activity can be regarded as giving help to public. The images and video clips from the so-called citizen journalists who post on Pantip were perfect evidence for inspection (*Birdeyview*, and *JD300*). In addition, with commentary from forum users who are experts in the topic discussed, some problems were solved (*Black Fox*).

- Pantip is sometimes used as a medium for positive propaganda and a campaign (*Destined by Hand*). It also sometimes presents original news about social problems which are unavailable in mainstream media (*Phaitoon*). Some stories are about

a complaint message that seeks for advice in dealing with a deceitful product producer or a service provider. When there are many forum users participating in the conversation thread, the power of the customer emerges. This results in attention being drawn to the product and to service companies, and also draws the attention of the mass media (*Anemone2526*).

It is worth noting Pantip's high rate of participation, which leads to its power as a source of public voices and concern. Many focus group respondents referred to this finding in relation to their own experiences in using Pantip. *Phaitoon* and *JD300*, again, they stressed that they usually think of Pantip as a medium when they have a story they want to publicise. *23Grandeur* highlighted that news posted in Pantip gain a higher degree of mainstream media attention than material presented on other sites. He said: "Pantip does not depend on mainstream media, but vice versa". *Uncle Leo* clarified what *23Grandeur* said by telling his experiences to the group. He discovered that: (1) news initially presented by ordinary people in Pantip attracts public awareness; and (2) journalists rely greatly on information in Pantip. *So Magawn* and *23Grandeur* also pointed out that sometimes they found that journalists easily copy information written by Pantip users into their reportage. The power of Pantip users is therefore associated with the popularity of the website, the large quantity of forum participation, and the good quality of the information that appeared in the debate threads. Nowadays, Pantip is considered one of the most influential organisations in Thai society, as far as the response from the focus group discussion is concerned. For instance:

Formerly, we counted journalists and policemen as the most influential people, but now I think Pantip is above them all. Pantip is a lot more influential than they are. (23Grandeur, 2013).

Everyone was nervous with reporters in the past, and police officers too. Today, that is not so. News reporters have to listen to society too. Perhaps they were agitated by public voices. Sorayuth³¹, for example, would be criticised immediately in Pantip if he said something a little bit wrong. (Uncle Leo, 2013).

News chosen to post on Pantip will ignite the thinking of news reporters to realise that they have to think of the benefits for the Thai people in general, rather than their news programme's sponsors...In the past, most news reporters thought they were important. When they presented anything, all people had to listen to it. Now this is not true. News can be criticised and can be interrogated by the public afterwards. (Phaitoon, 2013).

Bearing in mind the previous point, the most interesting result to emerge from the perspective of the Pantip users on their role in using Pantip is their capacity to counteract the bias of the news presented by the mainstream media. As noted before, in part 6.2 of this chapter, counterbalancing the information in the mainstream media is one of the users' value positions when using Pantip. *Jesus2000--=AnThraX=--* referred to this point again and commented that Thai news media today are obviously one-sided as a consequence of political unrest in the country. Although he did not mention the word "power" directly, what he does in the forum suggests the power of ordinary people over news professional.

³¹ Sorayuth Suthassanachinda, news programme producer and a very popular news host on Thai TV, Channel 3.

Today, news is so biased that it is difficult to believe in its information. The red-shirt people always follow the news, advocating them. Journalists then feed on the information for the red-shirt side. Similarly to the yellow-shirt people, they always sit by the news on their side... I think I can change nothing, but providing people with the correct information in Pantip. (Jesus2000--=AnThraX--, 2013).

Phaitoon also pointed out the business survival of media organisations reasoning, which leads journalists to a rare opportunity to present negative stories for their sponsors. He commented that this situation has an effect on news consumers because they are unable to receive balanced information. Those who need to reflect a negative outlook on society, or who need to see the other side of information, will therefore head to Pantip, owing to its freedom from the business model. Strikingly, *Destined by Hand* noticed the emergence of Facebook as Pantip's competitor, in terms of a tool for free speech. However, some focus group members commented that Pantip is superior because vulgar language is prohibited, contrasting ideas can be seen, and users are anonymous. They felt that these features support the power of the Internet forum in counteracting the bias in the news presented by mainstream media. They explained:

Concerning vulgar language:

In comparing these two websites, insult and dirty words are strictly banned in Pantip. A message taken from Facebook to post on Pantip would be softened. But what had been taken from Pantip to Facebook would be more serious. (23Grandeur, 2013).

Concerning contrast ideas:

For me, Pantip must be compared with mainstream media. News from TV, newspapers and so on, as we know, they are one-sided. People sharing news on Facebook are also biased. Pantip will help with this. It is reliable because it includes the opinions of people from the two sides. (Destined by Hand, 2013).

Concerning anonymity:

In my view, between Facebook and Pantip, I think Facebook is identified but Pantip is not. The advantage is that when Pantip is unidentified, everyone is free to speak out about whatever they want, both good and bad. On the contrary, to Facebook, the users use a real name and express themselves on the side on which they sit. Public can clearly see what colour this person is. So, people who prefer Pantip are those who prefer something that is not particular. (Big-jaw Person, 2013).

The perspectives of Pantip.com users on their identity

Following the above point, this research discovered two contradictory outcomes when focus group participants were asked whether or not anonymity produces the freedom of speech that is found in Pantip. On the one hand, half of all respondents agreed that preserving anonymity by representing themselves through the use of a pseudonym and other types of image in Pantip, encourages users to express opinions freely, both on the positive and negative aspects. *My name is OZ* explained that his undisclosed identity obviously induced him to a greater degree of confidence in online participation because no one knows who he actually is. On the other hand, the other half of the respondents strongly disagreed with this point. One reason is the control system of the website. Although having to provide a national identification number in the process of membership registration seems to be inconvenient for some first-time users, *Dr. Mooh* confirmed that this procedure is outstanding, since it makes abusive users feel that they are being monitored by Pantip's administrators.

Turning now to the question of Pantip users' identity in becoming citizen reporters, no one in the focus group supported this point. The majority expressed a view to the effect that although they evidently posted news on Pantip, they are ordinary Internet forum users. *Anemone2526* explained further that she merely took information from a secondary source, which is news from the mainstream media to post on the website. To this end, she thought she was just a person who brought the right news to the right readers. *Southern Guy* affirmed that his activity in Pantip throws light on the local news from his hometown in the Internet forum. As a result, he would rather be called a "news volunteer" than be called a citizen journalist, because of the fact that news posted in Pantip had already been presented by a professional reporter. *Oriental Skyline* obviously rejected these terms. He described himself as a reformer who advances wisdom based society, as well as Thailand's intellectualism through the public discussion on the news he selected.

Dr. Mooh offered an idea to support his exclusion of the citizen reporter from Pantip. He remarked that being a journalist is not as easy as circulating information and disseminating a video clip. However, the code of ethics is much more challenging and it is the sort of practice that needs to be instructed. *For 23Grandeur* and *Uncle Leo*, who regularly post news and clips they have produced on Pantip, again a citizen journalist is not what they wish to be. *Uncle Leo* said he likes cameras and taking a photograph, so does *23Grandeur*, who enjoys travelling and taking a video. All stories reported in Pantip were events that accidentally met either on their journeys or near their residential area. Some stories attracted public interest and also that of journalists who contacted them directly and asked for their consent to publicise it in mainstream media.

In conclusion, this chapter shows the findings from the four focus groups. Participants in the study consisted of two female and sixteen male Pantip users, of whom the majority were mature, highly-educated, and wealthy members of the Thai population. The core areas covered in the examination are extracted from answers to three of the themed questions of the research (RQs 2, 3, and 4). The respondents revealed that Pantip is huge because it is composed of a great number of stories, ideas and criticisms that are contributed by users, a part of whom are specialists in the subject, or they belong to one of the primary sources of information. This attribute leads users to participate in the site and to post news taken from other media in order to promote wisdom and morality, as well as to counterbalance mainstream information.

The process of posting news on Pantip can be explained through three steps, which are issue selection, original message creation in the forum, and feedback recognition. Online research skills, critical thinking, information analysis, and knowledge of the computer programme are applied to this process. However, online ethics and netiquette are remarkable, because they demonstrate that Pantip is a place for thoughtful people who not only contest opposing ideas with facts, but also patrol one another and inform the webmasters to eliminate offensive comments from the debate thread. Focus group participants also expressed their negative opinions on Thai news media by pointing out that journalists are one-sided as a result of the country's political conflicts, and because they value business prosperity rather than benefit to the public. Although the exercise of users' power in Pantip is unclear, research respondents highlighted the popularity of the website, as well as the high rate of participation in the forum, causing journalists to pay attention to it. Moreover,

as an open agora - which is relatively free from the business model, some negative issues and opposing information - which could not be reported in the mainstream media, can be seen on Pantip. In general, what this suggests is the role that ordinary people have played in news organisations.

For those who are interested in looking at the full details of the focus groups, the audio recording of all of the discussion and a complete transcription into a Word document in Thai language are attached in the accompanying DVD-R in Appendix D.

The next chapter will move to the findings from the interviews which were conducted with news professionals in the mainstream media. It will show how journalists react to the information on the Pantip website and how the practices of Pantip's users challenge their own.

CHAPTER 7

RESULTS OF THE INTERVIEWS

This chapter presents the findings obtained from the interviews which is the method used in the research to examine the impact of Pantip on the Thai mainstream news media. Twenty-four Thai journalists, who have worked in leading news media organisations, participated in the study. Their demographic information is shown in the form of tables in the first section of the chapter. Then, the responses to an inquiry and verbatim quotations from respondents will be illustrated in the following sections. All information in this chapter offers the answers to research question five, six, and seven.

7.1 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS

All of the respondents were requested to give a brief explanation about their background at the beginning of the interview. Although age, income, gender, education, and so on, are among the basic data that is needed in most studies, this research pays more attention to the work experience of the journalists because it is meaningful to the analysis. The table below shows the list of respondents, listed by seniority in terms of the number of years of experience in the news media. Information on their previous role is also provided. Additionally, it must be noted that all of the respondents were given a code for future mention. Using the code is shorter and more convenient than referring to these journalists by their full Thai names. Remarkably, it also signifies that the lower the number of the code they get, the more experience in the news industry they have.

Table 7.1 Demographic information of respondents

<i>Code</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Experience in news media</i>	<i>Current duties</i>	<i>Previous duties</i>
J1	Mr Prakit	35 years	Columnist, <i>Thairath</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Columnist in both daily and weekly newspapers • Reporter in all areas of coverage
J2	Mr Apisak	29 years	Deputy Director of News Department, <i>TNN 24</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporter in many areas of coverage in two broadcast media
J3	Mr Chavarong	26 years	Online Newspaper Editor-in-chief, <i>Thairath</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founder of Thairath Online • Politics editor • Documentary producer
J4	Mr Narit	25 years	Editor-in-chief, <i>Matichon</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various managerial positions at Matichon • Crime, politics, and beat reporter
J5	Mr Chai	25 years	Managing Editor, <i>Daily News</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief of News Bureaux • Editor and reporter
J6	Mr Teeradet	25 years	Online Newspaper Editor, <i>Matichon</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developer of Matichon Online • Political editor
J7	Mr Kaset	24 years	Assistant to Online Newspaper Editor, <i>Matichon</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business and provincial reporter
J8	Mr Amphai	23 years	Editor of Sport News Programmes, <i>ThaiPBS</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beat and assignment reporter

Table 7.1 Demographic information of respondents (continued)

<i>Code</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Experience in news media</i>	<i>Current duties</i>	<i>Previous duties</i>
J9	Mrs Pannee	22 years	Editor of Art and Culture News Programmes, <i>ThaiPBS</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio news producer • TV documentary producer
J10	Mrs Benjawan	21 years	Editor of Special Reports, <i>TV Channel 3</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business correspondent and news presenter • Economics reporter
J11	Mr Phaithoon	20 years	Online Newspaper Editor, <i>Siamrath</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economics editor, and chief reporter
J12	Ms Pentip	20 years	Assistant to Economics Chief Reporter, <i>Matichon</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economics and business reporter
J13	Mr Kreangkrai	18 years	Crime Chief Reporter, <i>Daily News</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewrite man • Crime reporter
J14	Mr Pramed	18 years	Political Reporter, <i>Thairath</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretary of Thai Journalists' Association
J15	Mr Phollapruet	17 years	News Programmes Editor-in-chief, <i>TNN 24</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporter in all areas of coverage
J16	Mr Sumran	16 years	Executive Vice President and Manager of News Department, <i>TV Channel 3</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporter in all areas of coverage

Table 7.1 Demographic information of respondents (continued)

<i>Code</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Experience in news media</i>	<i>Current duties</i>	<i>Previous duties</i>
J17	Mr Athip	11 years	Assistant to Editor of Art and Culture News Programmes, <i>ThaiPBS</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Columnist for film magazine • Entertainment reporter
J18	Mr Jaturong	10 years	Political Chief Reporter, <i>Matichon</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economics, social, and youth reporter
J19	Mr Viriya	10 years	Sport Correspondent, <i>ThaiPBS</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TV sports programme producer
J20	Ms Supattra	9 years	Social Reporter, <i>Matichon</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woman and youth, and royal reporter
J21	Ms Wannasiri	7 years	TV News Presenter and Programme Host, <i>NBC</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts and culture, and inside-story reporter • Television crew for drama
J22	Mr Prapong	5 years	Crime Reporter, <i>Daily News</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official at Thai Government House
J23	Ms Suwimon	5 years	Special Reports Correspondent, <i>TNN 24</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime correspondent
J24	Mr Pawat	3 years	Talk Programmes' Producer, <i>NBC</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lawyer

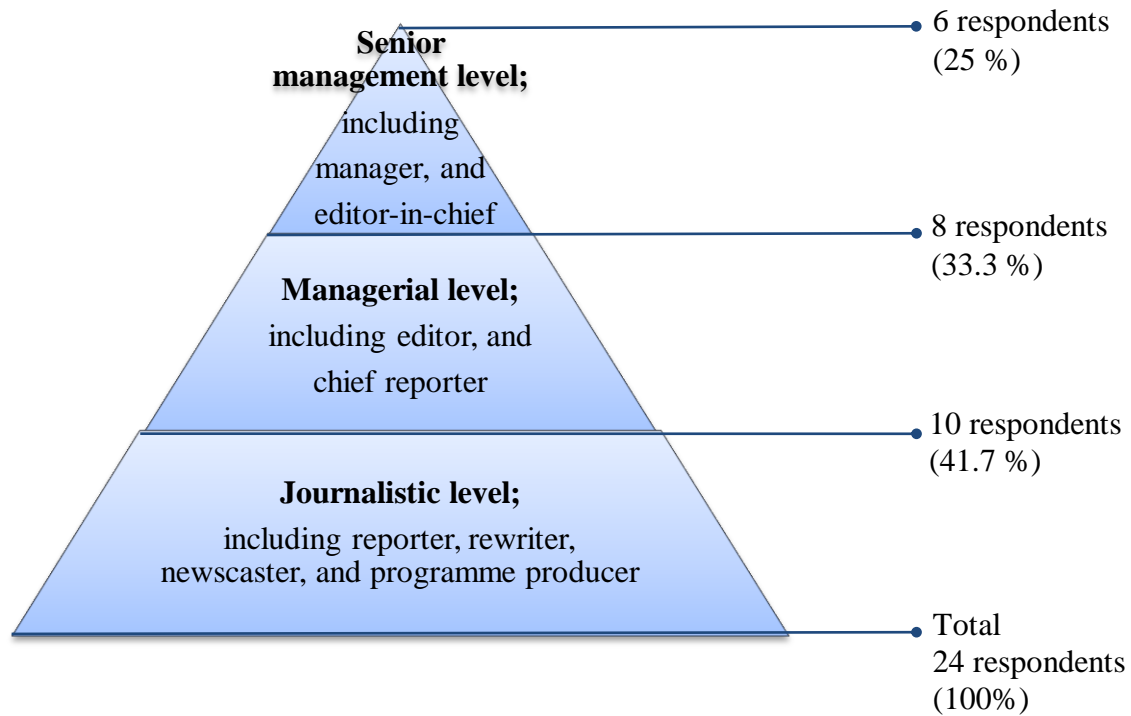
The table above provides demographic information with respect to the journalistic experience of the respondents in this research. It can be seen from the data that of the twenty-four interviewees, there are eighteen male and six female news professionals who perform a wide variety of roles in news organisations; including those of reporter, anchorwoman, editor, and pioneer of a news department. Pawat, or J24, is the youngest, as far as his journalistic background is concerned. Although he had been a lawyer for two years before joining the *Nation Broadcasting Corporation Public Company Limited* in 2011, he gained three-year work experience as a producer and script writer for news-talk programmes at this company. Prakit, or J1, is the most senior ones. He has worked for *Thairath* as a reporter in all areas of coverage as well as being columnist in both daily and weekly publications from 1979 until today. The table and figure below show the results achieved from classifying research respondents into groups by looking at their years of experience and their level in the hierarchy of organisations.

Table 7.2 Number of years of experience in news media of the respondents by grouping

<i>Number of years of experience in news media</i>	<i>Number of respondents with percentage in parentheses</i>
20 - 29 years	11 (45.8 %)
10 - 19 years	7 (29.2 %)
0 - 9 years	5 (20.8 %)
More than 30 years	1 (4.2 %)
Total	24 (100%)

As can be seen from Table 7.2, the majority of respondents in the interviews were senior news professionals. Of twenty-four journalists who participated in this study, eleven have worked in mainstream news media for over twenty years and seven for between ten and nineteen years. The long experience of these respondents in the news industry is advantageous for the research findings because it has tended to show the real impact of Pantip on the process of news production. The relevant point is that, as noted in the first chapter of this thesis, widespread use of the Internet in Thailand began in 1994, and Pantip was established in 1996. More than half of all research respondents have therefore worked in news organisations before the launch of the Internet for Thai citizens.

Figure 7.1 Level of hierarchy of the respondents in news organisation by grouping



As far as the level of hierarchy in news organisations is concerned, Figure 7.1 shows three categories of the responsibilities of the research respondents. Almost half of them have worked on a day-to-day basis focusing on gathering information and reporting news, which is referred to the ‘journalistic level’. Eight respondents are editors and chief reporters, which can be regarded as functioning on the ‘managerial level’, the task of overseeing people in the journalistic level. News professionals at the top level or the ‘senior management level’ also participated in the interviews. Their job positions include Editor-in-chief at *Thairath*, *Matichon*, *Daily News*, and *TNN*; Deputy Director of the News Department at *TNN*; and Manager of the News Department at *Bangkok Entertainment* or the Thai TV Channel 3.

In research question five, I asked “to what extent do journalists in mainstream news media pay attention to information in the Internet forum?” The theme explored in the interviews is the impact of news participation in the Internet forum on the journalists. The findings from this theme are illustrated in the form of a table in accordance with the questions in the interviews.

[illegible]

Table 7.3 presents the content analysis of responses from journalists on the main differences in their work before and after the widespread use of the Internet in Thailand. It is obvious that almost all of the respondents pointed out that the abundance of sources and information available on the World Wide Web is a major difference. Some journalists, for example J2, J10, J13 and J15, spotlighted the difficulties in gathering information, as well as the way news sources were approached in the past. They explained that twenty years ago journalists very much depended on themselves, in terms of finding information from publications or other records in libraries and talking directly to people involved in an event. J2 recounted his experience when the wedding ceremony of a famous person was a great opportunity for journalists to converse with important news sources, such as politicians, academics, and executives. Although he felt embarrassed by his presence there and was tired of working unpaid extra working hours, J2 considered it his duty. J13, a crime reporter, insisted that a good relationship with police officers is essential. In order to maintain the relationship, J3 regularly visited the police station and had face-to-face contact with officers.

Research respondents also mentioned the benefit of the availability of abundant information on the Internet, which makes it quick and easy for the reporter to report without leaving the newsroom. However, the comments from senior journalists on its drawbacks are worth highlighting here, because it illustrates the current practice of junior reporters. J17 observed that, today, face-to-face contact and a good relationship between reporters and sources is reduced as a result of the proliferation of social networking websites where any kind of information could be effortlessly taken and

circulated without checking facts or asking for permission from the people who were affected by that issue. J4, J5, J9, J10 and J15 pointed to two topics of concern in regard to young journalists in the Internet era. Firstly, the copy-and-paste habit has been applied to news reporting. Secondly, the process of thinking, particularly in developing news ideas, is incomplete. These circumstances obviously result in a poor quality of news content, as well as in the news industry in general. J15 considered some of his young colleagues to be ‘messengers’, not ‘reporters’, due to the fact that they merely told the editor about what they had seen and heard, without any analytical thinking or supplementary ideas. Moreover, J1 and J2, who have worked in mainstream news media for over thirty years, provided a profound outlook on junior reporters, who rely massively on online information. They said:

In the past, seeking information and reaching news sources were very difficult. I felt adrift because I didn't know where to start. ... Now that insecurity no longer exists, because the sources are around us, at our fingertips. But the problem for reporters today is that there are so many choices. How can they choose the best for their duties? (Prakit, 2013).

Some reporters do not go out of their way to make news from its origins, but they depend on information from the Internet instead. This leads to a lack of thought. If you use such information sensibly as part of your job, it is supportive. However, if you use it mainly, you will definitely fail. You are not a journalist at all, and then, one day, you will lose everything because of yourself. (Apisak, 2013):

It is apparent from Table 7.4 that Pantip is a source of information for almost all of the journalists in this study. Of twenty-four respondents, ten referred to this website during the interviews without being asked. J10 stated that Pantip is a “big information market”, which makes it necessary to visit it regularly. J17 also asserted that Pantip is a place of popular opinion. While interviewing members of the public on the street is the actual way to obtain these voices, journalist could skip this step by looking for public opinion on the online forum. Eight respondents revealed that they used Pantip for their work, but only occasionally access the site. J9 noted that Pantip was only useful when there was something happening in society and comment from people in general was required in order to support information in covering a story. However, there are two respondents who knew Pantip well, but who hardly use it. They gave a few reasons for this. J1 believes that ninety percent of the information in social media is garbage, because rationale and deliberation, as well as the quality of content production, are lower than those in printed work. J8 explained that content on the website that is published by mainstream news media is more reliable.

There was a significant difference between the senior and junior journalists with regard to the regularity with which they used Pantip. The respondents who have worked in news media for fewer than ten years seem often to visit Pantip. The youngest respondent, J24, revealed that he has used this website since he was in high school. Although he is not longer a student, he still accesses the forum and applies useful information to his news programme. J20 and J22 expressed that their very first coverage resulted from a topic discussed on Pantip. J19 also declared that he is one of Pantip’s frequent users, but it was used exclusively for personal purpose. J12 is similar to J19.

However, she explained that Pantip is filled with material on the subjects of societal outlook and human lifestyle, which could not be linked to her profession as an economics reporter. Even so, J12 provided a valid point, when she made a connection between Pantip and other social networking websites, such as Facebook and Twitter, by pointing out that they belong to the same user on a different platform.

J12's viewpoint is interesting, because two more research respondents, J3 and J13, confirmed that Facebook and Twitter are now supplanting Pantip, as far as online sources for journalists are concerned. They claimed Pantip has some limitations, owing to a process of registration for new members, and a subset of topics of discussion in the different '*Rooms*.' What this means is that getting information from Facebook and Twitter is quicker and more accessible. However, some respondents remarked on the role of these sites, in the way that they vary from that of Pantip. J4 discovered that instead of following only the website account of a government leader, like a Member of Parliament, a topic of public interest could be found on Pantip. J18 commented that disseminating information taken from Facebook is one-sided. Moreover, it is not the public but that person who receives great benefit from being paid attention to by the mainstream media. J23 provided a noticeable comparison by stating that Facebook is a private medium on public terrain, whereas Pantip is a public medium for public concern. That is the role Pantip has played for journalists.

Table 7.5 Type of information to which journalists pay special attention on Pantip.com

<div> <div>Respondents</div> <div>Coding categories</div> </div>	J 1	J 2	J 3	J 4	J 5	J 6	J 7	J 8	J 9	J 10	J 11	J 12	J 13	J 14	J 15	J 16	J 17	J 18	J 19	J 20	J 21	J 22	J 23	J 24	Frequencies
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
Point of view in a thread	•	•	•	•	•	•			•		•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•					15
Content in an original post							•	•		•				•							•	•	•	•	8
Image													•												1

From this data we can see that more than half of the research respondents specifically paid attention to information in a conversation thread. No matter what was in the response; including comments, ideas, judgments, opinions, suggestions, and so on, these words could be grouped under a broader term: the ‘point of view’ of Pantip users. J16 pointed out that the feedback from the audiences, particularly those on his news programme, is important because it is an ‘audit’ or assessment of his work. An original post is another type of information that attracts journalists’ attention. J10, J21, and J24 explained that they generally looked at the topic list that appeared on the frontend of the website and also on each ‘Room’ in order to explore social trends. Then, the topic with a large number of viewpoints would be selected to see the content inside. Interestingly, crime reporters, like J22 and J23, paid special interest to the complaints issue. They noted this issue could be reported in the mainstream media.

Table 7.6 Reaction to information on Pantip.com

<div>Respondents</div> <div>Coding categories</div>	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	Frequencies
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26		
Proceed with it and develop a news story	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•				•		•	•	•	•		•		•	•	•	•	•	•	19	
Use it as a reference or for supplementary details in existing news										•	•							•									3	
Use it as advice for making a decision on buying goods or services													•						•								2	

From the coding categories in Table 7.6, it is apparent that information on Pantip would be proceeded with and developed into a news story. Two paths were found, according to the journalists' responses. First of all, details that emerged in the thread would be ascertained if it was a new incident that had not been previously discovered elsewhere. J2, J3, J13, J14, J16, J18, J22, and J23 described the process of checking facts and reliability of information. This process includes contacting key people involved with an event and sending a journalist to inspect the area. J4 confirmed that a crime event reported on Pantip would be big news in the mainstream media if it was proven to be real. J8 pointed to the concept of news worthiness. He said a conflict story in Pantip was not lacking in human interest and it needed to be built on and disseminated. Secondly, the viewpoints of Pantip users could be used as a reference or as supplementary

information in existing news. J9, J10, J17 agreed that public opinion is a good supporting item in their reportage. J11 revealed that he took some questions found in debate threads to ask his news sources for a follow-up story. J15 and J20 also advanced the ideas of Pantip users into their news production.

7.3 THE IMPACT OF NEWS PARTICIPATION ON PANTIP.COM ON THE PROCEDURES OF NEWS REPORTING

I was interested to understand “how the users’ practices in the Internet forum challenge the journalistic practices of mainstream news media.” The theme explored in the interviews derived from research question six, which was the investigation on the impact of news participation in the Internet forum on the procedures of news reporting. The findings from this theme are illustrated in the form of table relating to the questions in the interviews.

Table 7.7 Factors making Pantip.com one of the main sources of information

Respondents Coding categories	J 1	J 2	J 3	J 4	J 5	J 6	J 7	J 8	J 9	J 10	J 11	J 12	J 13	J 14	J 15	J 16	J 17	J 18	J 19	J 20	J 21	J 22	J 23	J 24	Frequencies
Knowledge and skill in a particular area of Pantip’s users	•		•	•	•			•					•	•	•			•			•			•	11
A diversity of ideas from people in different walks of life									•		•	•					•		•			•			6
Participation, collaboration, and a dedication to sharing the knowledge of users		•				•	•			•						•							•		6
Unusual ideas and comments in the threads																				•					1

It is evident from Table 7.7 that the knowledge of users, collaboration and dedication to sharing knowledge among the users, as well as a diversity of ideas in the thread are three of the main factors that make Pantip one of the main sources for journalists. Eleven respondents acknowledged that many Pantip users are very knowledgeable and have, or involve, a great deal of skill in a particular area, subject, or activity. There are consistencies in the opinions of the most senior and the most junior journalists in the analysis. For the oldest news professional, J1, the emergence of social media has provided the Thai middle class with the opportunity to expose their intellect simply through their fingertips. He stated: “it is necessary for journalists to listen to ingenious comment on the Internet forum.” For the youngest respondent, J24, Pantip is an informative community. Users are mature and discuss with others by facts and evidence. Although some of them are not experts in a particular subject, they are very eager to search for such information. J24 noted that Pantip is not a battle-field but the winners are the users who can offer the best facts.

J15 gave an interesting viewpoint, stating that today almost everyone is a part of the Internet. Journalists are likewise a part of it, since they can find a lot of practical information. Pantip is influential because journalists take its information to disseminate in the mainstream media and Pantip users have proved to be more insightful than some news professionals. J5 and J13 also believed that Pantip users were more competent, due to the success of their news participation in the past, including the globally notorious case of

GT200³². To this end, J5 observed that Pantip seems to be a sort of online news agency. J13 noted that the incredible story of Pantip could not have happened without the collaboration of detailed knowledge in soldiery, engineering, and scientific subjects; as well as the dedication to sharing such knowledge between the forum's users.

With regard to the participation through knowledge, six respondents indicated this was a factor that made Pantip one of their main sources. J6 highlighted that the collaboration of experts is like a jigsaw puzzle. When a particular piece of knowledge from each user is put together in one thread, it creates "a clear picture of information" whereby it is not only helpful to the journalist's work, but it also solves a social problem. J14 noted that the participation in answering the question that is posted in the forum produces knowledge. Moreover, J21 and J23 agreed that some Pantip users are notable and professional, and are delighted to join the conversation in the thread. This causes Pantip to become the location of exclusive information, where journalists come to take it for development in the media. J16 extended this point by illustrating that Pantip and the mainstream media support each other. Journalists take information from Pantip so as to proceed with it and to disseminate it as news in the media. Correspondingly, Pantip users take news from mainstream media to circulate and discuss in the forum. For J16, this is a powerful dynamic of news production, where the input and

³² The GT200 is a fraudulent remote explosive detector which was sold by the UK-based firm to many countries, including Thailand. One of the Thai soldiers distrusted its capability and posted on Pantip in 2009 about his experience in using it. This first led to an extensive debate in the online forum and then resulted in a wider investigation by the Thai and the UK governments. Finally, according to BBC News England (2013), the owner of *Global Technical Ltd.*, the manufacturer and distributor of the GT200, was sentenced to seven years in jail. For the starting point of this scandal, please follow these hyperlinks:
(1) <http://topicstock.pantip.com/wahkor/topicstock/2009/12/X8694200/X8694200.html>
(2) <http://topicstock.pantip.com/wahkor/topicstock/2010/02/X8918821/X8918821.html>
(3) <http://topicstock.pantip.com/wahkor/topicstock/2011/07/X10783734/X10783734.html>

output can be seen in the same site. Additionally, in comparison to users' participation in Pantip with other social networking websites, J10 concluded that Pantip is more influential due to a great deal of information sharing. She explained:

I believe many Pantip users also have Facebook and Twitter of their own. But if they were not so popular, they would have just a network of friends or those that are accepted, which are a few. Let's say about one or two hundred persons. But the network in Pantip is more enormous. People who never know each other in real life can share information with one another. So I think this makes Pantip very powerful in terms of social participation. (Benjawan, 2013).

Bearing in mind the previous point, a diversity of ideas from people in different walks of life is another factor that makes Pantip one of the main sources for journalists. Despite two respondents in the study telling the researcher that they normally use Pantip only for personal purposes, J12 and J19 accepted this online forum as being attractive because it contains many comments and ideas from people with different employment and educational statuses. However, J9 and J17, who use this website to find information for their work, confirmed that popular opinion matters. Especially for J9, if there is a social affair that could possibly be broadcast, she would think about some hypothesis of popular opinion on that event. Then she would test it on Pantip to find out whether or not she and the public have a similar viewpoint. Additionally, she said: "it is a sort of finding friends to discuss with, without actually having a meeting with them." J11 and J22 also highlighted the benefits of the diversity of ideas in Pantip. J11 saw it in society, whereas J22 saw it in journalist's work. They said:

Of the political topics, those who like one political party would present what they favour, express their opinion to support that the party have done the right things very well, something like that. But those who support other parties would express the opposing opinion. What I want to summarize is that these are multi-coloured flowers showing democracy in society. (Phaitoon, 2013).

Reporters sometimes hold their opinion as the main one. But if they happen to think and look at different angle, and accept different opinion, they will have a different answer. For me, I think the variety of opinions is the best. We normally have different favourites. Even the same matter can be viewed differently. One opinion which differs from others is a changing point because it advances society. (Prapong, 2013).

In respect of the reasons for using information in Pantip, journalists in mainstream media explained that this was because it indicated public concern. According to many of the research respondents, this website is equipped with a wide variety of fora for different topics of concern; environment, religion, health, and culture, to name but a few. For J10, it is necessary to follow the discussion in Pantip, where many interesting stories have been found, and to “ignite the light of thought.” J4 and J6 remarked that, even though Pantip is just an online meeting place for like-minded people, it is truly a community which is part of society. Moreover, any topic of discussion found in the forum is a reflection of what is happening in society. J4 and J6 highlighted that Pantip is not only a source, but acts also as “eyes and ears for journalists.”

As far as journalistic practice is concerned, some respondents attempted to make a connection between a reason for using Pantip and journalism. J6, again, demonstrated that he had been trained since his early career to have eyes and ears everywhere in order to detect social movement. As a result of this rule, he exemplified that he had to put his left ear in Pantip’s *Sinthorn Room* (financial issues) and his right ear

to *Ratchadumnoen Room* (political issues). Similarly, J8 indicated that news professional is a person who must always be motivated and alert. In relation to the information on Pantip, he gave a logical perspective, stating that:

It is necessary for a reporter or editor to keep an eye on social trends. The duty of the mainstream media is to present information to the wider public. But do not forget that Pantip is online media for those who have purchasing power. Others may not know this website, may have no time, or cannot surf the Net. So, they only watch TV, or listen to the radio. This is rather the point. The media workers always have to realize what they are doing and for whom. Also, online social trends must be picked up in order to spread it widely. (Amphai, 2013).

Another respondent who referred to journalistic practice is J14. He pointed out that ‘the principle of celerity’, which meant that journalists must incorporate the current developments and trends. Particularly those who are political and economic reporters have to be aware of the latest information; otherwise reporters would fail to allow the public to be informed. J7, J20, and J21 supported J14’s point. J20 commented that the news is something about tendencies and movement. An outdated story can be published in a magazine, but the space in a newspaper is only for very up-to-date information. This is the reason people read a newspaper and, not magazines. As a broadcast journalist, J21 confirmed that the audience is significant for a commercial television channel. In her opinion, the basic rule of programme production is to disseminate whatever people are currently interested in. Pantip has proved to be a source.

Interestingly five of the respondents who are senior journalists fulfilling a task in the top level of organisations, recognised the relationship between public interest in Pantip and the business model in news media. J11 and J16 claimed this point. Moreover, J2, J6, and J15 distinctly identified the importance of the marketing concept, which is the idea of producing news that meets the needs and wants of the audiences in order to achieve business prosperity. Depending on public interest in Pantip is a way to guarantee this success. The following is an excerpt from J2, J6, and J15's explanation.

We access Pantip in order to know what the society are now interested in, which one is massive in arguments. We will then go straight to it, dig it up, and grow it. This is an attempt to make news that meets the needs of the market or of people who are a big group in society. (Apisak, 2013).

In making food for sale, we have to know what the consumers prefer to eat. Similarly, we have to present the news to meet the readers' needs; what they want to know, what they are interested in. These interests make us know that such news is in the readers' interests, definitely. If we prepare the news with these components, it guarantees our success. We have to know the demands of the market and then produce the products that respond to this demand. (Teeradet, 2013).

We have to pay attention to what the society are interested in. Today media also use marketing theory. ... In the past, the media would direct society on what they wanted to inform. But now it is unable to do like that. Some audiences do not believe in that news. Sometimes they don't want to know that information at that moment. So, reporters have to find out what the audiences now want to know and hear; then take that issue and develop it. (Phollapruet, 2013).

Unlike the three respondents above, J11 and J16 did not refer directly to the marketing concept. However, what they expressed is a clarification of the way in which journalists in mainstream media and information in Pantip are connected. J16 observed that the world has changed, as well as the Thai way of life. Today, there is a wide range of news choices. Television audiences are also smarter and want to know

only the matter that is useful for their subsistence. Journalists are, therefore, no longer able to provide them with unwanted information. J11 commented in the same way, but he went even further by describing that Pantip is composed of a lot of argumentative issues. Journalists have a chance to exercise their personal consciences and to develop those public opinions into news coverage. J11's response is an excellent representation of the other five research respondents, J1, J5, J14, J17, and J19, who suggested in interview that they rely on information in Pantip because it gives a 'hint' for news. That is to say, it contains newsworthiness or values that can be developed into coverage of a story.

Table 7.8 Change in journalistic practices after the emerging role of participatory journalism

<div> <div>Respondents</div> <div>Coding categories</div> </div>	J 1	J 2	J 3	J 4	J 5	J 6	J 7	J 8	J 9	J 10	J 11	J 12	J 13	J 14	J 15	J 16	J 17	J 18	J 19	J 20	J 21	J 22	J 23	J 24	Frequencies
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
Journalists must sharpen up ideas and increase knowledge.	•				•						•		•		•		•				•	•			8
Journalists must enhance a discipline of verification.			•	•		•	•		•					•				•						•	8
Journalists must strive to make the news more comprehensive and to enlighten its audience.		•						•											•	•			•		5
Journalists must follow up and adopt the latest trends.									•		•					•									3

The table above shows some changes in journalistic practice after the role of participatory journalism in Pantip emerged. One-third of respondents revealed that journalists must further improve the quality of news reporting by increasing their intellect and specialism. The ground for this response comes from the evidence provided by eight respondents who pointed out that Pantip users are very knowledgeable and proficient in fact-checking. J5, J11, and J22 therefore suggested that it is necessary for journalists to habitually gain new knowledge. J21 observed that information technology, particularly the Internet, is now advanced. However, news reporting today is harder because there is no longer one-way communication. Feedback from the audience also shows seriousness and intense conviction. For her, a news story is expected to be more thoughtful, causing news reporters must be more laborious, diligent, and prudent. Correspondingly J15, J13, and J17 underlined that practitioners must be wise in writing or broadcasting. News with “one said this - the other said that”, without insightful information, is substandard. Moreover, news organisations very much require specialised reporters.

The surprising result to emerge from the interviews is eight respondents identified that a change of journalistic practices after the emerging role of the participatory journalism in Pantip is that practitioners must enhance a discipline of verification. This finding results from the beliefs of interviewees, who indicated that Pantip users are anonymous, and some fora are composed of hearsay, fallacy, and propaganda, or even topics dealing with promotional efforts. Consequently, according to J3, J4, J6, J7, and J14, journalists must employ a system to test the reliability of information before disseminating it. That is to say, practitioners are obliged to recheck

facts with multiple sources and to ask various witnesses for comment. Particularly with sensational subjects, J4 stressed that news professionals must not be entrapped into personal or societal biases. For promotional issues, J24 suggested the ability of journalistic interpretation to determine the accuracy of work. J7, an online reporter, also proposed the use of appropriate words to present the degrees of certainty in news writing, if some of the information or opinions from Pantip are in need of instant diffusion. J9 expressed a view to the effect that verification is vital, but journalism should go beyond Pantip.

One thing that cannot be denied is that reporters depend on the information from Pantip. However, we must not let it be influential over our thinking. As long as reporters have a critical mind, question the job they do, and lead themselves, meaning that they do not let social trend ahead on and follow it. I think this element will help reporters to be able to maintain the quality of news. (Pannee, 2013).

J9's viewpoint is thoughtful, although few respondents including J10, J12, and J16 have the opposite ideas when they asserted that journalists should follow social trends on the Internet forum. However, the next finding from this interview question is that journalists must strive to make the news more comprehensive and enlightening for its audience. Senior respondents, like J2, are very concerned about a decrease in an investigative journalism and a watchdog role of the Thai press. He remarked that news on television today tends to emphasize sensational stories, of which Pantip and other social media are a source. He therefore recommended journalists make a change in their practice by asking which story has most value for the audience, doing more than simply grasping a dialogue from an online source. Moreover, J8, J19, J20 and J23

suggested that news must be reported with balance and purpose. Importantly, journalists' work must be applicable to citizens, telling them what the significance of that story is.

Turning now to the question of the degree of circumspection in news reporting, following the emergent role of participatory journalism, over half of all respondents in this study revealed it becomes more intense. Further analysis showed two reasons for these responses, which are: (1) information in Pantip could not be unconditionally trusted, and (2) the advancement of online communication technology promotes mass participation. In relation to the first reason, there are actually few respondents who indicate this point. J2, J13, and J19 expressed that news reporting is a task that engages in truth and impartiality. Although topics and discussions in the forum are convincing, journalists are required to develop the story taken from Pantip by incorporating the journalistic process; including distilling, researching, fieldworking, gathering multiple sources, and reporting with balance.

For the second reason, the rest of the respondents in this group agreed on the advancement of communication technology on the Internet allowing users to interact, to collaborate with each other, and to comment on news. As a consequence, the higher degree of circumspection in news reporting emerges in the form of the accuracy of information, particularly, as J3, J7, and J10 identified, the spelling of proper nouns, which is one of the most common feedbacks from readers or the audience. Moreover, many respondents discovered news participation leading to the increase in caution is helpful for their work because of the following explanations:

- It ensures the coverage of a story reaches public expectation (J1).
- It engenders trust in the news agency (J18) and the news profession (J21).
- It encourages practitioners to be aware of work quality and self-improvement (J4, J6, J11, J15, J22, and J24).
- It entitles social movement when news consumers are able to discuss topics, and news producers have to listen (J16).

Whilst most journalists in this study revealed that they are more circumspect in their work after the emergent role of news participation in Pantip, one-third of respondents (eight journalists) expressed that they felt unaffected. J8, J14, and J20 recognised the value of public criticism, which is one of the cornerstones of the news media. However, circumspection in news reporting remains a central responsibility for practitioners who serve society through the accuracy of information. J23 defined it in two ways; these are: (1) a personal awareness in the process of writing news, and (2) that is in an inherent part of work when it has to be publicised and public comments are unavoidable. J5 noted that the characteristic of news in the papers is tangibility and re-readability. Preserving circumspection in the story is therefore the normal practice of publisher. In addition, it is the best way to avoid facing prosecution from readers for imprecise information. J9 and J17 excluded participatory journalism from circumspection. For J9, it is not Pantip, but reporter's consciousness in ethics that causes the standard of news. For J17, it is not the editor but people in general who are his boss. Although the criticism of the audience is consequential, it is common sense for him to be prudent about what he thinks and distributes. He said:

“news does not dissolve in the air after transmission, but it has an effect on life and society” (Athip, 2013).

7.4 THE TENTATIVE ROLE OF NEWS PARTICIPATION ON PANTIP.COM IN SUPPORTING MAINSTREAM NEWS REPORTING

The theme of this investigation came from research question seven, in which I asked “to what extent do journalists in mainstream news media accept the Internet forum users as their helpers in news reporting?” The findings are illustrated in the form of a table in accordance with the question in the interview.

Table 7.9 Limitations of the journalists' work

<div>Respondents</div> <div>Coding categories</div>	J 1	J 2	J 3	J 4	J 5	J 6	J 7	J 8	J 9	J 10	J 11	J 12	J 13	J 14	J 15	J 16	J 17	J 18	J 19	J 20	J 21	J 22	J 23	J 24	Frequencies	
Knowledge	•		•	•		•		•							•		•		•					•		9
Time											•					•						•		•		4
Business model		•																•								2
Organisational policy							•		•																	2
News sources									•			•														2
Statute					•								•													2
Language														•												1
Health																			•							1
Technological dependence																				•						1

When the limitations of the work were asked about, many respondents stated that this was the inclusive question and, indeed, there is an abundance of limitations to be pointed out. However, as we can see in Table 7.9, some journalists sympathised with some of the answers, of which this section will explain only those that have more than two frequencies; including knowledge, time, business model, policy, source, and statute. Those remaining, which are language, health, and technological dependence, are considered to be individual conditions or personal delicacy. So they are excluded from the analysis.

With regard to *knowledge*, almost half of the journalists participating in the research agreed that it is the main journalistic limitation. J1, J3, J4, and J15 confirmed that the news professional is not a person who knows everything. Although some of them have a speciality, the majority have a wide scope of comprehension. This problem results from their educational background as most journalists in Thailand hold a degree in Journalism and Mass Communication Studies, where some specific subjects, such as law, politics, and economics, are omitted or are just an option. As a consequence, this is a gap that journalists need to have filled and that universities should support. J6 revealed that he only selected knowledgeable graduates and degree holders with honours to join his organisation. Apart from educational issues, other respondents observed that knowledge could be a limitation to their work in different ways. While J4 described some of his subordinates as having a good knowledge, but lacking the ability to deliver it, J8 remarked that his junior colleagues do not search for knowledge before going to the site. For J17, because of the rush and competition in news production,

the opportunity to acquire extra knowledge is rare. For J19, the lower knowledge in news results from less experience in news reporting. For J23, the enthusiasm to have knowledge is essential.

Concerning *time*, J11, J16, J22, and J24 explained that news production is a time-consuming process, particularly investigative reporting. Moreover, the journalist is responsible for more than one assignment in a day. So it becomes a limitation, because they felt that some news should be more precise than it was. The *Business model*, meaning that news is a product for making profits, is one of the journalistic limitations according to J2 and J18. Entrepreneurship, sponsorship, partisanship and commercials are factors determining news content. *Organisational policy*, as a result, becomes part of limitations, and J7 and J10 proved that some coverage of stories is forbidden or they are unable to present them as intensely as they want due to a strategic position passed down from a superior level. *Source* referred to the restriction in obtaining information. J9 and J12 indicated that possible sources are needed if the main source refuses involvement. *Statute*, relating to children in particular, is what J5 and J13 thought was vulnerable. The use of language and images of child victims have to be used extremely cautiously. Although there is a code of conduct, it is somewhat difficult for newspapers because they tell stories in written form.

Table 7.10 Benefits of Pantip.com for journalists' work

<div> <div>Respondents</div> <div>Coding categories</div> </div>	J 1	J 2	J 3	J 4	J 5	J 6	J 7	J 8	J 9	J 10	J 11	J 12	J 13	J 14	J 15	J 16	J 17	J 18	J 19	J 20	J 21	J 22	J 23	J 24	Frequencies
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
It is a repository of information which is diverse and modern, as well as simple and ready to use.	•		•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	20
It is a medium for hearing feedback from the audience.		•				•										•	•								4

Table 7.10 is quite revealing in several ways. First, it reaffirms that Pantip is one of the major news sources for mainstream journalists. Second, this finding correlates with data in Table 7.9 showing that knowledge and time appear to be the foremost limitations of journalists' work. Third, unlike the other tables, this table illustrates the biggest group of responses, consistent with the fact that diversity and freshness of information in Pantip are top benefits for Thai journalism. Only a small number of respondents indicated that the Internet forum is beneficial for work assessment when they find comments from the audiences or readers on their news. J2, J6, and J16 expressed that it would be a great success if they saw that their coverage of story enlightens public thought, providing society extensive discussion with rationality and wisdom. On the contrary, it becomes frustrated when news produced by their organisation has been used to abuse or assault someone. J17 similarly pointed to this benefit, and yet he claimed that Pantip is the best means to obtain public opinion.

Having considered the greatest number of responses, it was discovered that Pantip is not only a repository of information, but also the diversity, freshness, and readiness to use that online information which is advantageous for journalists' work. J12 and J19 accepted the benefits of Pantip for journalism in relation to its instant, up-to-date data, although they seldom use this website for news production. Moreover, J19 described Pantip as a search engine, and J12 explained that whatever she wants to know will be known after entering the forum. J22 respected the site as a good source for perceiving social harm. J7 and J8 also illustrated that threads in Pantip were proven to be valuable for mainstream journalists when Thailand was suffering from severe flooding in 2011. J3 acknowledged that the diversity of the forum stimulates journalists' attention to what is happening around them. J10 compared fresh information in Pantip with breakfast. This website is a must for her to visit every morning, apart from reading newspapers and watching news programmes. Strikingly, further analysis showed that four senior respondents; J1, J9, J11, and J13, highlighted that discussion on Pantip was useful for their thinking processes. The following extract from J9 and J11's explanations provides details.

While the media in general might not provide a channel for audiences' ideas and discussions, we can see commentary, review, and argument on Pantip. These arouse my thoughts because sometimes I think my opinion is absolutely right. But it is wrong, actually, when I found a contesting idea from one forum member who was challenging another on what I had believed to be right. This is a benefit to me. (Pannee, 2013).

I see it helps in a thinking process. Some situations I really have no clue. I do not know how to resolve the problem. But just after I get into Pantip, I see a lot of ideas from people who have more knowledge than me, who read a greater number of books than me. It helps me to analyse and make up my mind on something easier. (Phaitoon, 2013).

Table 7.11 Viewpoint of journalists on the statement that Pantip.com is their helper

[illegible]

A clear benefit of the Internet forum in aiding Thai journalism could not be identified by this analysis. As shown in Table 7.11, respondents who disagreed with the researcher's assertion outnumbered those who agreed that Pantip is their helper. The majority of the opposing cluster argued that even though Pantip tends to be part of news production, it is just an online source or a supplementary factor in news reporting. The expressions of disagreement include views that information from this source:

“can be omitted” (J4); “is not relied on all the time” (J10); “is not used thoroughly” (J14); “is only added for news value” (J20). J21 summarised by taking this position: “it is not a main dish, but a seasoning enhancing news flavour.” Moreover, J3, J16, and J22 disputed that the website is not designed to be a news supporter. In these accounts, the analysis concludes that coverage of a story can still proceed without Pantip. Other respondents noticed the condition of incompleteness. According to J6, J8, J17, J19, J23, and J24, information in the forum is unclear, grey, and fragmentary. Pantip is a good tool, yet journalists are required to justify its trustworthiness. J23 made a sound point when she said that: “a helper must be someone who can be fully trusted” (Suwimon, 2013).

However, nine journalists did, agree, with the claim that Pantip is a helper in journalistic work. Two-thirds of this group (six respondents) emphasised that the ability of these website users is equal to, or beyond, mainstream reporters in the following ways.

They are indeed journalists, although information is not completed, on the whole, but we have our news crew to double-check it. (Chai, 2013).

Their profession is not in this field, but from their presentation I can say they are journalists. (Kaset, 2013).

In some cases, or for someone, they can be regarded as editors. But for me, okay, they are helpers. (Pannee, 2013).

Pantip is not just a helper, it is a news agenda setter. ... Actually it is a leader of journalists. I look at it from different perspectives, but as more than a helper. (Phaitoon, 2013).

It is a helper, nay an opinion leader. It helps us to develop work more easily. Formerly, we had to start everything from one point. ... Pantip may well see it that six to seven are enough, but we extend it up to ten. The time employed is shorter. (Phollapruet, 2013).

Information posted in Pantip is more accurate than what we are presenting. We then grasp their remarks to elaborate it or develop new points into a follow-up story. (Jaturong, 2013).

Apart from the expressions above, some respondents accepted that the network of informed people in Pantip is also helpful to them. J2 and J13 highlighted the collaboration of the forum members, who are keen to tell society the truth about the topic discussed. Beyond this point, J1 looked into countless websites providing useful information for journalists, but he asked how many of them have proved to be one of the top ones, like Pantip. Even so, J12 is only one of those who is uncertain about the case. Although it can be argued that Pantip is journalists' helpers, according to the findings here, J12's perception on this claim could not be identified, because she repeated that she solely uses the online forum for personal purposes.

Table 7.12 Ways that Pantip.com users are advised to improve in order to be journalistic helpers

[illegible]

The last table of this chapter presents three suggestions that mainstream journalists made to Pantip users in order to improve the posting quality and, presumably, to become news helpers. First, they should enhance the journalistic ethos, meaning that the fundamental values in the information dissemination in Pantip must entail moral standards and good practice relevant to those applied in journalism. Although ten respondents who gave this advice did not refer directly to the term, the analysis showed that their responses that were associated with “journalistic codes of ethics” included:

- *Accuracy* (J1, J8, J12, and J19), particularly J19, stressed that a news story could not be rewritten after distribution, and audiences are more likely to recollect the negative matters than the positive ones. Pantip users must therefore be explicit with their information.

- *Presentation*, J10 explained that on many occasion she found a very interesting topic in the forum without the relevant details. In her view, any topic that comes with clarity and brevity is perfect. However, the following information must be related also.

- *Personal conscience*, for J16, referred to the use of the online forum as a platform for collaboration to create a happy and upright society. Likewise, J22 encouraged Pantip users to use the site sensibly and productively.

- *Independence* means thoughtfulness and rationality must be applied to online participation. For J13, having been an open-minded forum user is considered to be good practice. However, popular opinion in a thread is not always true and appropriate. As a result, J13 suggested the exercise of an independent mind about what has been expressed by the public in the forum.

- *Attribution* referred to the recognition of sources. J18 concisely noted that Pantip users should tell their readers where the information in their thread comes from.

- *Privacy*, J21 commented that it is a right, but the use of personal details, images and video clips of others, without their permission, are commonly found on the Internet forum. For her, the new media users must learn to realise the right of others; meanwhile, they have to learn to protect their rights also.

Turning now to the second suggestion that mainstream journalists gave to Pantip users in order to improve the posting quality and, presumably, to become a news helper. Seven respondents proposed a reduction in the number of emotional arguments; that is to say, discussions in the forum should be based upon reason and objective data, rather than on empathy and personal feelings. In addition, the use of abrasive and insolent language must be avoided. Research responses on this point also provide two distinct prospects. With emotional arguments, Pantip would lack credibility, according to J11 and J24, and the noteworthiness of this website would disappear, according to J15 and J17. However, without emotional arguments, J4, J6, and J14 believed that Pantip would be a pleasant community attracting quality members to join and share knowledge in threads. Two respondents recommended an end to the posting of hidden agendas which becomes the third suggestion in these findings. J2 and J9 described that some topics are willfully written but have mercantile or malicious intent. For J9, forum spamming not only misleads the public, but also sometimes initiates a protracted dispute.

In conclusion, this chapter presents the findings from interviews with twenty-four news practitioners working in Thailand's national news organisations; including newspapers, television networks, and news websites. Eighteen participants are male and the rest are female. They function in a wide variety of duties which can be grouped into three levels of hierarchy: (1) *senior management level*, including heads of department and executive editors; (2) *managerial level*, including editors and chief reporters; and (3) *journalistic level*, such as reporters, rewriters, and newscasters.

In relation to the number of years of work experience, half are senior journalistic professionals, meaning that they have worked in the news industry for over two decades. The other half is regarded as being junior because their experience has been less than twenty years. The responses from all these participants are the answers to research questions five, six, and seven. Besides, interview questions cover three themes of examination, which are: the impact of news participation in the Internet forum on reporters themselves, and on the procedures of news reporting, as well as the tentative role of news participation in supporting mainstream journalism.

As far as the impact of news participation in the Internet forum on reporters is explored, research respondents agreed that the abundance of online information became one major difference after the widespread use of the World Wide Web in Thailand, and Pantip has proved to be one of their sources of news. Most journalists pay special attention to viewpoints shown in threads. Then, they proceed with this topic to develop it into a news story. Regarding the impact of Pantip on the procedures of news reporting, this study has discovered that mainstream journalism has to depend on the Internet forum, because it tells journalists what people are currently interested in and thinking about. Moreover, detailed knowledge, diversity of ideas, and a dedication to sharing such information among forum members, are the factors that lift Pantip so that it is one of the top online sources. Interestingly, circumspection in news reporting becomes more intense as a consequence of these factors. However, no significant tentative role of Pantip in supporting mainstream journalism was found from the analysis. Although Pantip provides a strong benefit for journalistic work, over half of respondents revealed at the end of interviews that Pantip could not be considered as their helper

because of a lack of a journalistic ethos and a great deal of emotional argument in most fora.

For those who are interested in looking at the full details of the interviews, the audio record of all of the interviewees and their complete transcriptions into a Word document in the Thai language are attached in the accompanying DVD-R in Appendix D.

The next chapter will discuss the findings from all of the methodologies used in this research together, and see how it has important implications for developing Internet Studies in Thailand. Importantly, the chapter will suggest whether or not Pantip is a part of socio-political change and is becoming a tool of democratisation for Thai citizens.

CHAPTER 8

DISCUSSION

Pantip was one of the first websites to be established in Thailand when the Internet was being introduced to the country, but today it is still among the lists of the top online media that are widely used as essential tools for information exchange. However, the main problem that has emerged from this environment, particularly in the academic research literature, is that there has been very little discussion about how and why users participate in this website, and what its key contribution to Thai democratic development actually is.

This research specifically investigated Pantip with respect to the site users' practices in news participation and the impacts of that participation on mainstream journalism. The investigation consisted of three parts, which also related to the three objectives of the study. Firstly, the content in the discussion threads was examined. This part concerned the analysis of discourse in Pantip's conversation threads in order to discover how power, in terms of intertextuality and socio-cultural practices, as well as discursive practices, was manipulated in the online forum. The next objective was to examine the content creator. This second part involved Pantip users being invited to focus group discussions in order to identify their shared beliefs, aims, actions, ethics and etiquettes in their forum participation, and the processes of posting news on the website, as well as their perspectives on news media and on themselves as news participants. Lastly, the third part was undertaken to examine the impact of the content. In-depth interviews were conducted with professional journalists in order to

ascertain the impact of Pantip on reporters and on the procedures of news reporting. Findings from all three parts of the investigation will be incorporated and discussed further in this chapter in the following ways; (1) the role of Pantip in Thai society; (2) the use of Pantip and the users' practices in news participation; and (3) the impact of Pantip on mainstream journalism in Thailand.

8.1 THE ROLE OF PANTIP.COM IN THAI SOCIETY

As mentioned in the literature review, this research pays particular attention to the sense of 'place' in the Internet forum where people meet and chat on the World Wide Web by posting and replying to messages. The responses given by both Pantip users and mainstream journalists indicate that the Internet is now their major source of information. Its anywhere-anytime and self-selective functions, meaning that users are able to search and filter for their preferred text on whatever occasion, in particular encourages the idea of "mass self-communication" that was proposed by Castells (2009).

However, Pantip is an exceptional virtual place in Thai society, not only because of the idea of 'self', in terms of the producing, sending, and receiving of information, but also due to the instant interaction and two-way communication between 'mass' senders and 'mass' receivers, for which Pantip users strongly wish. Moreover, the non-commercially focused business model of the website is also a key factor in making users feel that Pantip does not belong to, or take sides with, a particular group. The actions of keeping the website under control are also interesting. The first action is the process of membership registration in which a Thai national identification number

must be presented. The second action is adherence to the strict rules and regulations for posting message, violating one of which will mean that the message will be deleted from the conversation thread shortly after such violation is detected. These actions, or control systems, have proved to be effective in maintaining the quality of Pantip's topic boards and of the site users' entries, although anonymity still remains a controversial issue among new media scholars, particularly in regard to online behaviour.

Notwithstanding that anonymity has caused some problems to Pantip. Some users have taken advantage of it by disseminating propaganda, as well as by circulating reviews about products and services for the writers' own benefit. This study, therefore, suggests Pantip readers should be armed with a good sense of judgment and discretion. However, on the question of the true advantages of this online forum, the research found that it is a free and open place for everyone, and they can express both positive and negative points of view on any subject matter, even news presented by the mainstream media. Again, professional journalists have also highlighted this benefit, by referring to Pantip as a place for popular opinion, and they particularly access it for comments when a particular topic becomes important to the society. The value of public voices that was mentioned by the journalists, and the freedom of expression pointed out by forum participants, promote Pantip as a centre of power for Thai citizens. Moreover, concerning the elements of democratisation accentuated by Parry and Moran (1994), Welzel and Inglehart (2008), and Dryzek (2013), Pantip has definitely become an online medium for Thai democratisation. This research successfully advances the knowledge of Internet studies by proving that the Internet forum, in Thailand as an example,

has a great potential to be a tool for socio-political reform. At the same time, it can be argued that, in the Thai context, the online environment is found to be healthy as a result of regulation. In fact, Pantip regulates its content to foster the site's standards, not to restrict the topics of discussion, except those that breach social norms, morality, and law.

Another interesting finding is that the power of Pantip users is associated with the popularity of this website, where there is a high rate of participation among people from different walks of life. This finding reinforces what Sreberny-Mohammadi (1998) has described on the role of the media in the process of democratisation through encouraging public participation and cultural pluralism. Pantip is a medium through which ordinary people can publicise their stories, and some of those stories attract mainstream media attention. Moreover, its role as a single place for seeking advice, telling society the truth in times of crisis, running a campaign, and making complaints exemplifies “a vibrant politico-cultural space” (Khiabany and Sreberny, 2009) on the Thai Internet. Importantly, the large number of the forum's participants, as well as the good quality of information in conversation threads, makes Pantip one of the most influential organisations in Thailand. This claim is supported by the focus group participants, who noted that the power of Pantip is beyond that of the press and the police force, because of the massive number of voices. This finding also accords with the idea of the power of media that was suggested by Mancini and Swanson (1996) and Street (2011). The mass media are competitors with other power centres such as political parties, but the Internet and digital communication are strong competitors to the traditional media.

In relation to the good quality of the information in a conversation thread, a possible justification may be that this results from the attributes of Pantip users. Responses from research questions one and two highlight the significant role of Pantip users in Thai society. They discuss news in the forum because of their desire to: (1) change society by promoting wisdom and morality, and (2) counterbalance the information in the mainstream media. Their clear expectations, aims, and the actions of some from the research samples also uphold this claim. Strikingly, findings from the discourse analysis, particularly in the parts dedicated to intertextuality and socio-cultural practices, correspond to those received from the focus group. These related findings from the three research methods demonstrate the function of the forum participants in two ways. Firstly, regarding the posting of a message, Pantip users employ either an '*internal factor*', which is individual experience and perception, or the '*external factor*', which includes social values and conventions as well as the relevant rules and regulations when expressing views. Secondly, regarding responding to a message, emoticons are used as a tool for evaluation. Comments or ideas that gain a high number of satisfied emoticons from forum participants show that they contain great value. To put it another way, such comments or ideas are acknowledged by the public for their quality and validity.

The orientations of the forum's participants and the shared attitudes or beliefs among them, which have been explained above, not only provide a picture of social forces, but also reveal the actual civil society that exists in contemporary Thailand. Although 'civil society' remains a highly elusive concept, as mentioned in the literature review, the definitions of the term that were given by White (1996) and

Anek (1999) are very helpful in identifying the democratic life and action in Pantip as being civil society. The key explanations from these two scholars are that civil society is a voluntarily formation by strangers, who participate in the group to protect or advance their interests, have the freedom to govern themselves, and who work together equally without concern for seniority. However, this research addresses Pantip members as an 'online civil society', owing to their daily activity, which relates to their entering the forum and taking part in a thread several times a day. The most interesting finding is that online civil society, in Pantip, entails social movement, for which the following paragraph will explain the reasons.

As noted before, counterbalancing the information in the mainstream media is one of the main reasons for posting news on Pantip. In spite of this, the stories associated with the personal interests of forum starters, and issues overlooked by journalists, are primarily selected for circulation. Pantip users also criticised that the work of the mainstream news media is one-sided, incautious, bigoted, and dependent on the profit-focused principle, leading reporters to having limited freedom in reporting facts and news itself becomes the information that media need to sell, rather than the information that people need to know. These negative responses reinforce Pantip users' ideas on issue selection and on postings on Pantip for public discussion. Moreover, in combining the research results from Pantip users' discursive practices concerning the challenging of hegemony (see Table 5.2 in Chapter Five on page 214), participation on Pantip illustrates the idea of the 'democratic struggles' that were proposed by Mouffe (1998). Today, a democratic revolution is no longer limited only to the political and economic arenas. In Pantip, the cultural and societal issues are

a common arena that forum participants attempt to move forward. The empirical findings in this current study provide a new understanding of social forces and social movement in the Internet forum. The role of forum participants in introducing democratic reform to the media themselves and in using the forum to neutralize the hegemony of Thai mainstream media is identifiable in the Thai case.

8.2 THE USE OF PANTIP.COM AND USERS' PRACTICES IN NEWS PARTICIPATION

A strong relationship between ordinary people and professional journalists in Thailand was discovered when the reasons for using Pantip were examined. Although both of these groups referred to Pantip as an important source of information, which is huge, diverse, and valuable, their purposes in accessing the site were completely different. For the former group, Pantip is used as a medium for exchanging views and sharing experiences, whereas the latter group goes into it in relation to public concern and for reflection on what is happening in society. Moreover, without being asked, many journalists in this study referred to Pantip as their source of news. This relationship demonstrates its function as a “market place of ideas”, as pointed out by O’Neil (1998) and Voltmer (2006), where the voices of people in an online forum overcome the domination and agendas of an élitist club, like the mainstream media. Pantip is a virtual place where people can meet and chat. However, access to technologies, freedom of communication, and the careful consideration and discussion in this virtual place, confirm that Pantip is a “public space” for Thai citizens, as far as the definition provided by Tanner (2001) is concerned. Moreover, it is indeed one of the “agonistic public spaces” (Mouffe, 2013), because a wide range of ideas and

conflicting views can be seen in the forum. These views, on the one hand, are expressed by Pantip's users as a way to resist the hegemonic role of the mainstream news media, and, on the other, they are accepted by journalists who regularly visit the site to gauge for popular opinion.

Responses to the question on the factors that have made Pantip become one of the main sources of information for journalists reveal the hidden gems in the Thai Internet forum. Apart from a diversity of ideas from people from different walks of life, the forum participants' knowledge in a particular area, as well as the collaboration and the dedication to sharing such knowledge, are noteworthy. Similarly, responses from Pantip users indicate that skills and knowledge are some of the most important factors for them in the process of posting news in the forum. Outstanding skills, including critical thinking and information analysis, not only lead to the quality of online content, but also imply that there are "intelligent agents" (Slevin, 2000) in Pantip, where the site users establish and sustain communal relationship within news discussion. Additionally, their practices of news participation noticeably expand the concepts of "intellectual work" and "everyday workers in the information economy", that were introduced by Sreberny and Khiabany (2010), into the Internet forum, where Pantip also successfully provides a public space for its users that enables encouragement of the knowledge society.

Pantip users' practices of news participation are unfolded by research question three, with which the process of posting news in the forum was investigated. This process involves issue selection, original message creation, and

feedback recognition. Regarding issue selection, this first step of presenting news, again, reaffirms the idea of agonistic public space in the Thai Internet forum. Although it is true that information posted in the forum is taken from the mainstream media, Pantip users apply moral standard in order to decide what should be spread online. Indeed, the issues selected are the news stories associated with personal interests. However, it is not that simple because, for '*soft news*', the findings show that these stories must come from a reliable source, must convey a good feeling to the readers, and must just be seen on the inner pages or in a small column in the newspapers. For '*hard news*', the process takes longer, because the background information is involved and the details have to be gathered well and fully understood. A forum starter also has to be ready for the debate and inquiries in the thread that will follow. These practices clearly indicate the social production of intellectual work in Pantip.

Again, Mouffe's agonistic public space is underlined in this study, because Pantip shows Thailand's democratic potential for the digital media, where there are the articulation and contestation of different views and voices, but the rational consensus is not necessary in the debate threads. This online participation in Pantip characterises the "Thai version of agonistic public space" where it also embodies the realization of the notion of Jackson's regime of image in modern Thailand. Indeed, Pantip is a part of a state apparatus when the government excessively monitors the media and online contents for silencing domestic political crisis. However, Pantip seems to fit this paradigm because, on the one hand, it abides by the structure of control in terms of legal mechanisms for the site's existence. On the other hand, Pantip users conform to the restrictive rules for fora usage while maintaining "the image of smooth calm"

(Jackson 2004a and 2004b) through the investment in a nice public face and the valuing of a polite speech, as well as their desire for a neutral net space and their self-styling as moral and learned transmitters of knowledge. The following sections will discuss on these practices in full.

Criticism from readers is very influential and becomes one of the main factors that cause Pantip users to carefully select the stories they post in the forum. The second process, which is original message creation, is therefore concerned with the practices of borrowing, editing, and adding information that are taken from the mainstream media. This finding corroborates the findings of several previous studies, such as those conducted by Bowman and Willis (2003) and Glaser (2010), who point to the functions of participatory journalism. However, this study furthers the current debate in the field by proving that the Internet forum remains one of the most powerful online media outlets in supporting this function. Moreover, news participation in Pantip, where people discuss and extend stories created by mainstream media, institutes what Bowman and Willis (*ibid.*) call a “networked community” in Thailand where a healthy media ecosystem exists. Strikingly, the process of selecting and presenting news in the forum truly represents the gatekeeping duty of Pantip users. The way they rewrite the news in an unemotional tone, pay attention to spelling, add extra details deriving from personal insight, provide sources of information, and hide or blur the faces of people in an online image, are also very good journalistic practices that surpass those of the mainstream reporters.

The final process of news participation is feedback recognition. Indeed, the process has no connection to journalistic practices, but the interaction among the forum's participants apparently illustrates a comprehensive online social relationship in Pantip. The first finding is the way in which a forum starter is involved in a conversation thread to provide more information and to answer all of the questions submitted by readers. This instant reaction and two-way communication between the news sender and the news receiver successfully fulfills the incomplete function that the mainstream news media are unable to support. The next finding, which can be regarded as a less formal means, is the forum starter's acknowledgement of the forum participants' comments. Pantip's emoticons are not simply used as a means of expressing feeling, but as an evaluation of such comment, as well as being an encouragement for those who propose a good idea. These two interesting results are a meaningful explanation suggesting that Pantip is a virtual community, according to the definitions given by Fernback (1999), Rheingold (2000), and Cantoni and Tardini (2006). However, this current study strongly agrees with the previous project that was conducted by Miller and Slater (2000, cited in Green, 2010) who point out that there is nothing virtual about the Internet because a computer-screen community is similar to a face-to-face community. The relevant argument is that Pantip users' practices in using discourse at the micro level (see Chapter Five on page 215-8) and the Thai text-based emoticons (see Chapter Six on page 240) represent similar social norms and values to those they respect in real life.

The way members of the networked community in Pantip function and organise themselves is another important finding, showing that the rules of interaction in their real lives have been transferred to the forum. Communicative online practices found in this study are also heterogeneous and are truly subject to individual awareness. However, the way they conduct themselves in regard to opposite views and discourteous participants is very systematic. Two practical ways to manage contribution are through: (1) “*intellectual contribution*”, when confrontational ideas from a reader can be opposed through additional facts provided by the forum starter, and (2) “*public censorship*”, when all of the participants perform as forum moderators to police offensive content by informing the webmaster and controlling the ill-mannered actions of others by criticising them in the thread. This human association, or as Castells (2001) and Fuchs (2008) refer to it, an “individualized relationship”, yields a benefit to Pantip through two facets. First, it helps to maintain the quality of the forum and especially to eliminate inflammatory messages posted by Internet trolls. Second, it forces a reshaping of the role of the Internet forum, particularly on the current concepts relating to participatory journalism. The findings on this impact will be fully discussed in the following section.

8.3 THE IMPACT OF PANTIP.COM ON MAINSTREAM JOURNALISM IN THAILAND

The most disappointing findings to emerge from this current study are that Pantip users do not identify themselves as so-called “citizen journalists” and mainstream reporters do not fully consider Pantip users to be their helpers in the process of news production. Thought-provoking statements are that, Pantip users, think that they are only

forum participants who bring the right news to the right readers; whereas, journalists, believe that the information in Pantip is incomplete. However, we can easily contest these journalists' points of view because, on the one hand, focus group participants have pointed out that they found journalists have no compunction about copying information from the fora in their reportage and, on the other hand, the interview respondents revealed that they have to put their eyes and ears on Pantip in order to detect social movement and the latest trends. This finding supports previous research conducted by Middleberg and Associates (cited in Cantoni and Tardini, 2006) that showed that the Internet is now a part of modern journalism and most journalists depend on the online fora, even though they are believed to be the least credible sources. Moreover, in binding this result with the concept of alternative media that has already been discussed in the literature review, and Pantip users' aims and expectations in news participation, which has already been explained in section 8.1 of this chapter, Pantip is clearly Thailand's alternative medium in terms of news production and consumption.

Pantip users' perspective on their identity, that they are ordinary people who bring the right news to the right readers, is thought-provoking. This is because it indicates that mainstream news media remain the society's authoritative institutions in terms of news outlets and professionalism. Forum participants recognise that journalism requires specific practices that needed to be taught. They, therefore, only pick their favourite "*processed information*" to circulate within their group of like-minded people who join any of the 33 '*Rooms*' for the 33 topics of discussion in Pantip. Then, that information is "*re-processed*" through editing, fact-checking, commentary, and peer review by

other participants, some of whom are very knowledgeable or skillful in such tasks. These activities in Pantip are a good representation of what Bowman and Willis (2003) call “participatory journalism”, and this research thus profoundly emphasises that aggregation and collaborative contributions are the key attributes of this concept, particularly in the Thai case. Although “citizen journalism” is becoming one of the most common terminologies in relation to the competency of ordinary people to present news, the difference is that it is an individual effort or a single contribution to news ecology. As a result of the participatory function of Pantip, audience agency has a significant impact on Thai mainstream sources, because news is reacted to and repaired. Moreover, the efficiency of the Internet forum rivals that of traditional weblogs and microblogs, which are today often seen by numerous media researchers to be central to the position of participatory journalism and civic empowerment.

The substantial benefits of participatory journalism for news media have been discussed thoroughly in the literature review. However, the real impact of Pantip on Thai mainstream journalism is that news stories are transferred to a specialised segment of the readers or audiences by Pantip’s users, and so Pantip becomes deeply informative due to their participation. Indeed, it is a repetition of findings, but the responses to research question six reaffirm that journalists appreciate the ingenious comments in Pantip, where a particular piece of knowledge from each of the participants creates a clear picture of information, which is very helpful for their work. As a result of collaboration by intellectuals in the forum and their activities, which can also be regarded as knowledge management, the mainstream media’s journalistic practices are challenged by Pantip users’ participatory function to improve them in two contradictory ways.

On the one hand, owing to the proliferation of Internet usage and of knowledgeable users, news professionals must enhance their wisdom and specialism and must strive to make news more comprehensive and enlightening. On the other hand, owing to the massive amount of information in Pantip from anonymous contributors, the degree of circumspection needed has become more intense, not in news reporting, but in the discipline of verification. To this end, journalistic principles must be exercised considerably in dealing with Pantip's information, and news practitioners must not let social trends lead their way in terms of working and thinking process.

From the participatory function in Pantip, where news from mainstream sources has been taken for "*re-processing*", and some original messages and insightful commentaries from forum participants become the "*raw material*" for the next journalistic work, this, therefore, creates a powerful dynamic for the news system because the information inputs and outputs can be seen on the same site. Findings from research question five show that Pantip is the starting point of news production, when interesting information has been taken by journalists to develop into news or into a follow-up story. Likewise, it is the end point when that news is taken for discussion, and journalists return to the forum to see the feedback which they also consider to be an assessment of their work. This dynamic is continuous, reciprocated, and essential as Pantip is the main online database for social issues and the active hub of audiences' feedback for the traditional media. In addition, Pantip users are the agenda setters who offer journalists the salient issues that are now of collective concern. Although some journalists solely access Pantip for personal purposes, it can be argued

that interesting information may possibly be transmitted orally to their colleagues. This combination of findings provides some support for the conceptual premise that, as Deuze (2003, cited in Bently *et al.* 2007) has pointed out, participatory journalism forces a reshaping of the current theories about online journalism. Even so, in Thailand, Pantip and its users not only advance the idea of quality news reporting, but also influence the thinking and working processes of reporters.

The supporting role and relationship between professional journalists and Pantip users can also be discovered when the weaknesses of each are reviewed. From the journalists' viewpoint, the main limitations of their work are a lack of specific knowledge as a result of their educational background, while the information in Pantip lacks a journalistic ethos and involves emotional argument. From the Pantip users' viewpoint, some posts and threads consist of personal or societal biases, while the mainstream news is also one-sided as a consequence of political uproar in the country. The dynamic of Pantip, as the ordinary people's public space for discussion and as the journalists' source of information, therefore, provides a gap-fill function and counterbalancing action for the other. Regarding the downsides of the business model in which news is a product for sale in the media industry, and business survival are a major factor of news content, again, these two groups both support and oppose each other in Pantip. The forum participants use this website to present the other side of information, whereas journalists spotlight such information because it is about the readers' or audiences' interests which guarantees commercial success.

From this finding, the dominance of entrepreneurship, sponsorship, partisanship, and commercialisation over news production is alleviated through participatory journalism.

In conclusion, this chapter incorporates all of the research findings and discussions on Pantip by means of three dimensions, which are: its role in Thai society, the practices of its users, and its impact on Thai mainstream news media. The next is the final chapter. It will draw from the entire thesis, pulling together the various theoretical and empirical strands in order to illustrate the importance of Pantip and the characteristics of Thai online participation. In addition, the limitations of this current study are explained, and recommendations for further study are also provided.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

During recent decades, Thai cyberspace has continuously grown, with more users and more digital activities, particularly on social media. However, an older form of online participation, the Internet forum, still remains one of the most popular and powerful “public spaces” for the Thai people. Given its centrality to Thai society as a huge open space for public opinions, and the current events that are discussed on the topic boards are often cited in the press as exemplified on the first page of the introductory chapter, this research was designed to determine how Pantip can be used as a tool for civic empowerment and democratisation. Moreover, the aims of the study were to examine who the site users are, why they participate in the forum, and what the effects of online news discussion on the Thai mainstream news media are. Before moving to the thesis’s conclusion, this chapter begins by outlining the limitations of the current study. Then, unanticipated findings from the research are highlighted, and these will be followed by the recommendations for further work. The last section illustrates the significance of the findings from this project; these are the importance of Pantip and of Thai online participation.

9.1 THE LIMITATIONS OF THE CURRENT STUDY

An issue that was not addressed in this study was the concept of social media. In fact, the Internet forum is a part of this term, which is defined as any “new” communication technologies that support user-generated content and allow individuals to build a network for interacting, sharing, discussing, and co-creating

such digital information. However, this research defines Pantip as a public space for Thai people who use it as a virtual meeting place to exchange stories and ideas. As already mentioned in Chapter One, Pantip provides 33 “*Rooms*” for 33 topics of discussion. These “*Rooms*” encourage and enclose intimacy and rapport among forum participants who have homologous interests. The concept of social media is, therefore, incompatible with this project because “society” involves order and complexity. Furthermore, most social media function on proprietary software from the West, and some are commercial platforms, like Facebook, that is now traded on the stock market in the United States of America. This feature is completely opposite to Pantip’s vision and mission, particularly in its position as a non-commercially focused website, as pointed out in Chapter One. This feature also conflicts with important findings of the research that suggest that participatory journalism is a constructive way to mitigate the impact of the business model on the Thai news industry.

Another issue that was not addressed in this research was the function of foreign Internet fora, especially those that belong to the West. There are, indeed, many interesting contemporary cases concerning rules, regulations, and restrictions on the forum usage which, to a certain extent, challenge such functions in Pantip. However, the online environment of various foreign fora is beyond the scope of investigation in this study which places a special attention to the dynamic relation in news production between ordinary citizens and professional journalists in the Thai conditions. The emphasis on the specific examination in Pantip delivers a clear picture of Thais’ Internet fora in which social norms and morality in online participation, as well as

security apparatus and legal mechanisms in terms of the control, are unique on its own merits.

The most important limitation in this current study lies in the fact that the number of focus group participants was relatively small. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, fifty-two Pantip users were originally selected and invited to take part in the research. However, only eighteen of them agreed to engage in the discussions although the invitation clearly stated that their real names would be used instead of their pseudonym in order to conceal their identity on Pantip. This number was relatively satisfactory when they were split into groups which consisted of four or five people in each and so everyone had enough time to respond to the research questions. It was yet a weakness also, because this number was not a good representation of the larger population. Caution must, therefore, be applied as the findings may not be transferable to represent all of Pantip's members of whom there are believed to be over a hundred thousand. The supposition about this limitation is that most users prefer to preserve their anonymity. Notwithstanding that the real identities and the demographic information of all Pantip members are very interesting and absolutely important in relation to carrying out some possible future projects, this would have been difficult to ascertain because anonymity is at the very heart of the online forum.

There are two unanticipated findings from this current study, and they may serve as a basis for future studies. These are: (1) the impact of communication technologies and other social media websites on the current journalistic practices of young Thai reporters; and (2) the emerging role of Facebook as a source of news for journalists. In relation to

the first issue, this was discovered when considering the differences in journalists' work before and after the widespread use of the World Wide Web in Thailand were examined. Senior journalists who have worked in news media for over twenty years highlighted their concern about the shift of newsgathering in the Internet era, in that junior journalists depend heavily on online information. For the second issue, it was found that Facebook is liable to become one of the sources of news. However, its strong benefit for Thai journalistic work is unclear, because two conflicting ideas were expressed by both focus group participants and the interview respondents. These unexpected results provide a new phase of solemn scholarly debate and they initiate some more research questions for further study.

9.2 THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Although the accessibility and abundance of online source is a central benefit for journalists' work, since information can be found quickly and easily without leaving the newsroom, this becomes a drawback for current journalistic practice. The reflection from senior practitioners is that young Thai reporters neglect to make and maintain face-to-face contact and good relationships with human sources. They almost effortlessly take online information to re-circulate in the traditional media without checking facts or asking for permission from the people involved in an event, and they lack analytical thought. It would, therefore, be interesting to assess the effects of these poor practices on the quality of news content and on the news industry in general. Moreover, many questions have been thrown up for further investigation, including: how do news organisations proceed with this problem? What are the reasonable

approaches that may be used to tackle this issue? And, could this possibly be interpreted as being the negative side of participatory journalism?

More research is needed to better understand the clear benefits of Facebook in supporting mainstream journalistic works. Conflicting ideas were found in this current study when Pantip users argued that Facebook is contrary to the online forum because it is a self-moderated medium and its content is much personalised. However, there were two irreconcilable comments from interview respondents. Some journalists claimed that, unlike Pantip, the information in Facebook is quicker, fresher, and easier to access, and now it is taking over from Pantip with regard to the attribution of news, while some journalists disagreed with this view and indicated that networking and social participation in Pantip is massive and goes beyond its rivals. Yet, the intriguing point that emerges from this debate is Pantip and Facebook, or any other social networking website, belong to the same user but use a different platform. If the debate is to be moved forward, therefore, a comparative study is strongly recommended. Future research might explore news participation in these media, concentrating on the negative and positive dimensions of each website, and comparing the experiences of individuals within the same group. More information on participatory journalism in the different types of online media would help us to establish a greater degree of understanding on this matter, particularly in the Thai environment.

Bearing in mind the limitations of this current study and the recommendations for further work which are presented above, the most obvious finding to emerge from this project is that Pantip is an exceptional virtual place, where the views and voices of people from different walks of life can be expressed and heard. As the research begins with an introductory chapter that presents the citations from the national newspapers on the evidence showing the power and competency of Pantip, it can be underlined here that, theoretically, this online forum is an important “public space” for Thai civic empowerment. Although, in and of itself, the potential of this space is not strong enough to produce Thai democracy and to change the country’s political structure, the contestation and articulation of current affairs by the forum’s participants are truly the practices of democratisation. In other words, Pantip is an important tool in the forward movement of democratic struggles, and it makes a great contribution to the democratisation process in Thailand.

Practically, Pantip is also an unusual kind of public space, where freedom of expression is expected, but where strict regulation in relation to the posting of a message is accepted by its members (for example, see Pantip’s thread on page 24 of Chapter One). This regulation, on the one side, comes from the rules that were set up by the website and supervised by the webmaster; and, on the other, comes from the forum’s participants, who perform as moderators to police the content and actions of themselves and others. These controls, therefore, yield benefit to Pantip because the online discussion community has become a healthy one as a result of the quality of its information and its attentive members. However, Pantip’s rules in relation to expressing views in the forum manifest the contemporary form of “the Thai regime of images.”

The explanation of this concept, provided by Jackson (2004a), is useful for this study because it shows that Pantip is a medium that helps to maintain “the image of the smooth clam” (a traditional cultural pattern under the appearances of ideal cultural order – Jackson, 2004b, p. 221) in Thai society. Likewise, it was part of the silencing of domestic political critiques when the Royal Thai Army launched a coup d’état in May 2014, after the six-month turmoil of anti-government rallies, according to the researcher’s personal observation.

The literature review on major Thai political events in the past also indicated the essential determinants of Thai socio-political change. These determinants include modernisation, economic globalisation, and the middle class. Obviously, Pantip is an online medium which is a part of modernity, but the striking finding is that Pantip’s *News Talk* participants are mature, wealthy, highly educated, and are employed for income. This group of Thai populations post and discuss news in the forum because they aim to promote wisdom and morality in Thai society, as well as to counterbalance the information in Thai news media. Their unique association, clear expectations, and shared attitudes or beliefs, which are seen among the forum’s participants, are a representation of online civil society. With the three factors, which are (1) the competency of participants; (2) the high rate of participation; and (3) the quality of information that regularly attracts public attention, Pantip has become a power centre for Thai people and it is one of the most influential organisations in the country. Moreover, it can be used as a powerful tool for social movement, as well as for a democratic reformation of the Thai media themselves.

In regarding to its role as a hegemonic confrontation to mainstream news media, Pantip could also be called the Thai version of agonistic public space. Additional evidence supporting this claim derives from close examination of Pantip users' practices in news discussion, in which it was found that a wide range of ideas and conflicting views can be seen in the threads. The concept of agonistic public space that was introduced by Mouffe (2013) is highlighted in this study, because Pantip shows Thailand's democratic potential for the digital media, where different opinions are welcomed and rational consensus is not necessary. This definitely contrasts to Habermas' public sphere, where deliberation, unity, and final agreement take place. As a consequence, the "public sphere" is a concept that is rejected in this project due to its definition and its nature, which are incompatible with research findings. However, "agonistic public space" is accepted, because it is a good representation of the diversity of views, voices, and topics of discussion on Pantip. Moreover, with respect to its role in Thai society and usage by the forum participants, this agonistic public space supports the work of 'intelligent agents' who maintain a healthy news ecology in Thailand by way of their practices in news participation in the fora, which are presented below.

Pantip users' practices in the processes of posting news in the forum, the application of ethics and netiquette, as well as the way they conduct themselves towards opposing views and discourteous participants, clearly indicate the social production of intellectual work in Pantip. The significant practices employed in news discussion include individual moral standards, critical thinking and information analysis, and some journalistic principles. These findings can be related to the analytical thought of Sreberny and Khiabany (2010) about everyday workers in

the information economy. As they have pointed out in regard to the link between the intellectual debate and the accessibility of public space, Pantip is a promising digital platform from which Thais can create a knowledge society. The idea of Internet users as intelligent agents, proposed by Slevin (2000), is already discussed in the literature review chapter. However, the current findings have gone some way towards enhancing our understanding of the communal relationships in a Thai Internet forum. On the one hand, criticism of forum participants is very influential on their online behaviour and digital activity. On the other hand, their interactivity helps to maintain the quality of discussion community and advances the role of Pantip in Thai participatory journalism.

Although Pantip's users and professional journalists access fora for different purposes, a strong relationship between these two groups was discovered in this research. The role of the online forum in relation to Thai journalistic work is that Pantip is the source of social affairs, and, importantly, a source of active audiences' feedback that Thai traditional media fail to provide. However, the real impacts of Pantip on Thai mainstream news media result from the intellectual contribution of Pantip users. News - which is "a vital part of any democratic project" (Lewis, 2006, p. 308) and which this research considers to be "*processed information*" from professional practitioners - has been taken and transferred to a specialised segment of readers in the forum. Then, it has been "*re-processed*" through editing, fact-checking, and commentary by knowledgeable forum participants. Finally, journalists return to Pantip for "*raw material*", or new information, for their next stories. This continuous and reciprocal relationship between Pantip users and journalists creates a powerful dynamic of

news ecology. Many theorists, as shown in Chapter Three of this thesis, suggest that, indeed, the editing, fact-checking, and commentary on news by ordinary people as being the activities of so-called “citizen journalists”. However, Pantip users could better be called “an active audience agency of news”. The variety of thoughts, the collaboration and the dedication to sharing information in the fora has not only developed Pantip as an alternative medium, in terms of news consumption, but also as a centre for information input and output for news production.

News participation on Pantip, in fact, provides the challenges to the journalistic practices of the mainstream news media in Thailand that cannot be appreciated, as far as the research findings are concerned. However, Pantip remains a powerful online media outlet that supports participatory journalism, although today numerous worldwide media researchers tend to recognise traditional weblogs, microblogs, or any other social media as being more proficient for such functions. The concept of participatory journalism is reviewed in the literature chapter as the aggregation and the collaborative and thoughtful contributions of the Pantip users, who are also agenda setters, since the discussion threads have an influence on the content of national news media. While it is clear from the findings that Pantip users and journalists support each other’s tasks, at the same time, they provide a counterbalancing action for one another. These two groups have both mentioned the effect of the business model on Thai news content. As a result, the empirical findings in this study provide a new understanding that the dominance of entrepreneurship, sponsorship, partisanship, and the commercialisation of news production in mainstream media can be alleviated through participatory journalism.

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- Phaitoon [ไพฑูรย์]. (2013). Focus group discussion, 23 March.
- So Magawn. (2013). Focus group discussion, 16 March.
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- Athip Klinwijit [อธิป กลิ่นวิจิต]. (2013). Interviewed, 15 May.
- Benjawan Wongwilai [เบญจวรรณ วงศ์วิล]. (2013). Interviewed, 21 May.
- Chai Patacamin [ชาย ปะคามินทร์]. (2013). Interviewed, 17 May.
- Chavarong Limpattamapanee [ชวรงค์ ลิ้มปัทมปาณี]. (2013). Interviewed, 23 May.
- Jaturong Pathumarnont [จตุรงค์ ปทุมานนท์]. (2013). Interviewed, 28 May.
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- Pentip Aksornneam [เพ็ญทิพย์ อักษรเนียม]. (2013). Interviewed, 28 May.
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- Viriya Tunnukoolkit [วิริยะ ตันนุกูลกิจ]. (2013). Interviewed, 15 May.
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Background information

The title of this research is “*Thai Internet Forum: User Practices in News Participation and the Impacts on Mainstream Journalism*” The principal investigator of this project is Mr Phithaksak Thisaphak, a student at the Centre for Media Studies, SOAS, University of London.

The aim of the research is to study Thai Internet forum users and the perspectives of Thai professional journalists on the Thai Internet forum. In cooperation with my supervisor, Professor Annabelle Sreberny at SOAS, University of London, I am collecting the data from the Internet forum on the website www.pantip.com. The data and research results will be submitted to the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, SOAS, University of London, for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Procedures and protection

The research involves a focus group discussion on your coverage of stories, opinions and any comments in your forum. In addition, to analyse the forum users’ identities, your demographic information will be recorded.

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. Any information you supply for use will be treated confidentially. Any personal information will be anonymised in any resulting publications, unless it is your pseudonym, which will only be referred to in the thesis.

Thank you very much for participating,

Phithaksak Thisaphak
E-mail address 296639@soas.ac.uk

CONSENT STATEMENT

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Before I carry out the research, I would like you to read the following statements and confirm your agreement to taking part in this study by putting the tick mark in the following boxes.

☐ I confirm that I have read and understood this Participant Consent form.



☐ All the questions I have on this research have been satisfactorily answered.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving any reason.

I agree to participate.

Participant's name (please print):

Date:

Tick this box if you would like to receive a summary of the results of this study (no personal results) by e-mail ☐.

E-mail:

APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SHEET FOR FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Section 1: Your demographic information.

Instructions: Please provide your information by filling in the blanks or giving a check mark where appropriate.

Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 21-30 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 31-40 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> 41-50 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 51-60 years	<input type="checkbox"/> Over 61 years
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	
Domicile	<input type="checkbox"/> Bangkok	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify_____)	
Marital status	<input type="checkbox"/> Single	<input type="checkbox"/> Married	<input type="checkbox"/> Separated or Divorced
Highest level of education			
	<input type="checkbox"/> No schooling completed		
	<input type="checkbox"/> 12 th grade		
	<input type="checkbox"/> High school graduate		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Vocational certificate		
	<input type="checkbox"/> High vocational degree		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional degree		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral degree		
Employment status			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Employed for wages		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Out of work and looking for work		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Out of work but not currently looking for work		
	<input type="checkbox"/> A homemaker		
	<input type="checkbox"/> A student (please specify your level _____)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Retired		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Unable to work / Do not work		

Employer type

- ☐ State government employee
- ☐ Local government employee (city, county, etc.)
- ☐ Federal government employee
- ☐ Employee of a for-profit company or business or of an individual, for wages, salary, or commissions
- ☐ Employee of a not-for-profit, tax-exempt, or charitable organisation
- ☐ Self-employed in own not-incorporated business, professional practice, or farm
- ☐ Self-employed in own incorporate business, professional practice, or farm
- ☐ Unable to work / Do not work

Total income per month

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 10,000 baht | <input type="checkbox"/> 10,001-20,000 baht |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20,001-30,000 baht | <input type="checkbox"/> 30,001-40,000 baht |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 40,001-50,000 baht | <input type="checkbox"/> Over 50,001 baht |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No income | |

Section two: Your Pantip.com usage

Instruction: Please provide a response to the following questions by putting a check mark in the box or writing the answer in the space.

How long have you been using Pantip?

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year | <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 7-9 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More than 10 years | |

How often do you access Pantip **without participating in the forum**?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a day, every day | <input type="checkbox"/> Several times a day, every day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Several times a week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month or less | |

How often do you **post news** on Pantip?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a day, every day | <input type="checkbox"/> Several times a day, every day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Several times a week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month or less | |

How often do you participate **in a conversation thread** in Pantip?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a day, every day | <input type="checkbox"/> Several times a day, every day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Several times a week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month or less | |

On average, how many hours per time do you spend on Pantip?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 hour | <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 hours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 hours | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 7 hours |

In which period of the day do you access Pantip?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Morning | (6 - 12am) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon | (12am – 6pm) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evening | (6 – 12pm) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Night | (After midnight – 6am) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain | |

Your pseudonym in Pantip is _____

Why do you use this pseudonym?

What type of image do you use to represent yourself in Pantip?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your own photo | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Others' photos (e.g., superstar, celebrity) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Object (e.g., books, lamps) | <input type="checkbox"/> Animal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Natural vista (e.g., forest, sea) | <input type="checkbox"/> Cartoon or character graphic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Place (e.g., tourist attraction, monumen, historical site) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Text effect or any text-based image | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No image | |

(Only for participants using their real image in Pantip) Why do you use your real image?

(Only for participants not using any image in Pantip) Why do not you use any image to represent yourself?

What are the top-three news media from which you commonly take news to post on Pantip?

(Please specify the newspaper's name / news agency / news programme / news website, for example)

1.

2.

3.

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SHEET FOR FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS IN THAI LANGUAGE

รายละเอียดโครงการวิจัย

ข้อมูลเบื้องต้น

โครงการวิจัยหัวข้อ “กระดานสนทนาทางอินเทอร์เน็ตไทย: ปฏิบัติการการใช้งาน และผลกระทบต่อสื่อมวลชนกระแสหลัก” (*Thai Internet Forum: User Practices in News Participation and the Impacts on Mainstream Journalism*) เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาหลักสูตรปริญญาเอก สาขาสื่อมวลชนศึกษา วิทยาลัยบูรพศึกษาและแอฟริกันศึกษา มหาวิทยาลัยลอนดอน ประเทศสหราชอาณาจักร โดยมีนายพิทักษ์ศักดิ์ ทิศาภาคย์ เป็นผู้วิจัย และมีศาสตราจารย์แอนนาเบล เซรบนเบอร์นี่ เป็นอาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์ ทั้งนี้งานวิจัยมุ่งเน้นการเก็บข้อมูลในกระดานสนทนาทางเว็บไซต์พันทิป โดยจะมีการประมวลผลและนำเสนอผลการวิจัยแก่มหาวิทยาลัยลอนดอนต่อไป

วิธีการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูล และการเก็บรักษาข้อมูลส่วนตัวของกลุ่มตัวอย่างในการวิจัย

งานวิจัยนี้ใช้ระเบียบวิธีวิจัยแบบการสัมภาษณ์กลุ่ม (Focus group) ของผู้ตั้งกระทู้ในเว็บไซต์พันทิปในด้านการรายงานข่าว การแสดงความคิดเห็น และการสนทนากับผู้อื่น นอกจากนี้รูปภาพและนามแฝงของผู้ตั้งกระทู้ จะถูกจดบันทึกเพื่อนำไปวิเคราะห์ และหาข้อสรุปตามวัตถุประสงค์ของการวิจัยอีกด้วย

การให้สัมภาษณ์กลุ่มของท่านในครั้งนี้เป็นไปโดยความสมัครใจ ผู้วิจัยจะเก็บรักษาข้อมูลที่ได้รับจากตัวท่านเป็นความลับ ทั้งนี้ ข้อมูลรายบุคคลของผู้มีส่วนร่วมในการวิจัยทั้งหมดจะไม่มีเปิดเผยในเอกสารวิจัย มีเพียงนามแฝงของท่านเท่านั้นที่จะกล่าวอ้างอิงถึง

ขอขอบคุณเป็นอย่างยิ่งสำหรับความร่วมมือครับ

พิทักษ์ศักดิ์ ทิศาภาคย์

E-mail address 296639@soas.ac.uk

แบบให้ความยินยอมการมีส่วนร่วมในการวิจัย

ผู้วิจัยขอขอบคุณที่ท่านสละเวลาเข้าร่วมในการสัมภาษณ์กลุ่มครั้งนี้ ขอให้ท่านโปรดอ่านข้อความข้างท้ายนี้อย่างละเอียด และกรอกข้อความ หรือทำเครื่องหมายลงในช่องสี่เหลี่ยม

- ☐ ข้าพเจ้าขอยืนยันว่าได้อ่านและเข้าใจแบบแสดงความยินยอมนี้อย่างถี่ถ้วนแล้ว
- ☐ ผู้วิจัยได้ให้ความกระจ่าง และตอบข้อสงสัยของข้าพเจ้าทั้งหมดที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการวิจัยนี้

ข้าพเจ้ารับทราบว่า การมีส่วนร่วมในการวิจัยนี้เป็นไปโดยความสมัครใจ และข้าพเจ้ามีสิทธิ์ที่จะยกเลิก และปฏิเสธการเข้าร่วมได้ตลอดเวลาโดยไม่จำเป็นต้องชี้แจงเหตุผล

ชื่อผู้มีส่วนร่วมวิจัย (โปรดเขียนตัวบรรจง):

วันที่: _____

โปรดทำเครื่องหมายลงในช่องสี่เหลี่ยม หากท่านต้องการทราบผลสรุปของการวิจัย โดยผู้วิจัยจะส่งไปยังอีเมลของท่าน ☐

อีเมล : _____

ข้อมูลส่วนบุคคลของผู้ร่วมสนทนากลุ่ม

ส่วนที่ 1: ข้อมูลด้านประชากรศาสตร์

คำแนะนำ: โปรดกรอกข้อมูลของท่านลงในช่องว่าง หรือเขียนเครื่องหมายถูกลงในช่องสี่เหลี่ยม

อายุ	<input type="checkbox"/> ต่ำกว่า 20 ปี	<input type="checkbox"/> 21-30 ปี	<input type="checkbox"/> 31-40 ปี
	<input type="checkbox"/> 41-50 ปี	<input type="checkbox"/> 51-60 ปี	<input type="checkbox"/> มากกว่า 61 ปี
เพศ	<input type="checkbox"/> หญิง	<input type="checkbox"/> ชาย	
ภูมิลำเนา	<input type="checkbox"/> กรุงเทพมหานคร และปริมณฑล		<input type="checkbox"/> ต่างจังหวัด (โปรดระบุ _____)
สถานภาพ	<input type="checkbox"/> โสด	<input type="checkbox"/> สมรส	<input type="checkbox"/> เคยสมรส
การศึกษาสูงสุด	<input type="checkbox"/> ไม่ได้ศึกษา	<input type="checkbox"/> ประถมศึกษา	<input type="checkbox"/> มัธยมศึกษา
	<input type="checkbox"/> ปวช.	<input type="checkbox"/> ปวศ.	<input type="checkbox"/> อนุปริญญา
	<input type="checkbox"/> ปริญญาตรี	<input type="checkbox"/> ปริญญาโท	<input type="checkbox"/> ปริญญาเอก

สถานภาพการทำงาน

<input type="checkbox"/> เป็นพนักงาน หรือลูกจ้างที่ได้รับค่าจ้าง
<input type="checkbox"/> ประกอบกิจการส่วนตัว
<input type="checkbox"/> ออกจากงาน และกำลังหางานใหม่
<input type="checkbox"/> ออกจากงาน แต่ยังไม่หางานใหม่
<input type="checkbox"/> เป็นแม่บ้าน ทำงานบ้านและเลี้ยงบุตร
<input type="checkbox"/> เป็นนักเรียน นักศึกษา (โปรดระบุระดับการศึกษาที่กำลังศึกษาอยู่ _____)
<input type="checkbox"/> เกษียณอายุ
<input type="checkbox"/> ไม่ได้ทำงาน

รูปแบบการทำงาน

- ☐ เป็นข้าราชการหรือเจ้าหน้าที่ ในหน่วยงานปกครองส่วนกลาง
(เช่น กระทรวง กรม สำนัก)
- ☐ เป็นข้าราชการหรือเจ้าหน้าที่ ในหน่วยงานปกครองส่วนท้องถิ่น
(เช่น กำนัน ผู้ใหญ่บ้าน อบต. อบจ. สก. สข.)
- ☐ เป็นพนักงานรัฐวิสาหกิจ
- ☐ เป็นพนักงานหรือลูกจ้างในบริษัท หรือองค์กรธุรกิจที่แสวงหากำไร โดยได้รับ
ค่าจ้าง เงินเดือน ค่านายหน้า ค่าส่วนแบ่ง
- ☐ เป็นพนักงานหรือลูกจ้างในองค์กรที่ไม่แสวงหากำไร องค์กรการกุศล หรือ
หน่วยงานที่ได้รับยกเว้นไม่ต้องชำระภาษี
- ☐ เป็นกิจการส่วนตัว (ค้าขาย วิชาชีพ เกษตรกรรม) โดยตัวท่านเองเป็นเจ้าของ
เป็นผู้บริหาร หรือเป็นผู้ดำเนินการหลัก
- ☐ เป็นกิจการของครอบครัว (ค้าขาย วิชาชีพ เกษตรกรรม) โดยตัวท่านเอง
ไม่ได้เป็นเจ้าของ ไม่ได้เป็นผู้บริหาร หรือไม่ได้เป็นผู้ดำเนินการหลัก
- ☐ ไม่ได้ทำงาน

รายได้ต่อเดือน

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ต่ำกว่า 10,000 บาท | <input type="checkbox"/> 10,001-20,000 บาท |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20,001-30,000 บาท | <input type="checkbox"/> 30,001-40,000 บาท |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 40,001-50,000 บาท | <input type="checkbox"/> มากกว่า 50,001 บาท |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> ไม่มีรายได้ |

ส่วนที่ 2: ข้อมูลด้านการใช้เว็บไซต์พันทิป

คำแนะนำ: โปรดตอบคำถามดังต่อไปนี้ โดยเขียนเครื่องหมายถูกในช่องสี่เหลี่ยม หรือเขียนคำตอบในช่องว่าง

ท่านใช้พันทิปมานานเท่าไร

- | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> น้อยกว่า 1 ปี | <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 ปี | <input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 ปี |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7-9 ปี | <input type="checkbox"/> มากกว่า 10 ปี | |

ท่านเข้าพันทิป (เพื่อเยี่ยมชม / เพื่ออ่าน / เพื่อหาข้อมูล) บ่อยแค่ไหน

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> วันละครั้ง ทุกวัน | <input type="checkbox"/> หลายครั้งต่อวัน |
| <input type="checkbox"/> หนึ่งครั้งต่อสัปดาห์ | <input type="checkbox"/> หลายครั้งต่อสัปดาห์ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> เดือนละครั้ง หรือน้อยกว่านั้น | |

ท่านเข้าพันทิป (เพื่อตั้งกระทู้) บ่อยแค่ไหน

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> วันละครั้ง ทุกวัน | <input type="checkbox"/> หลายครั้งต่อวัน |
| <input type="checkbox"/> หนึ่งครั้งต่อสัปดาห์ | <input type="checkbox"/> หลายครั้งต่อสัปดาห์ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> เดือนละครั้ง หรือน้อยกว่านั้น | |

ท่านเข้าพันทิป (เพื่อตอบกระทู้ / เพื่อแสดงความคิดเห็นในกระทู้) บ่อยแค่ไหน

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> วันละครั้ง ทุกวัน | <input type="checkbox"/> หลายครั้งต่อวัน |
| <input type="checkbox"/> หนึ่งครั้งต่อสัปดาห์ | <input type="checkbox"/> หลายครั้งต่อสัปดาห์ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> เดือนละครั้ง หรือน้อยกว่านั้น | |

ท่านใช้เวลาานเท่าไรต่อการใช้งานพันทิปหนึ่งครั้ง

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> น้อยกว่า 1 ชั่วโมง | <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 ชั่วโมง |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 ชั่วโมง | <input type="checkbox"/> มากกว่า 7 ชั่วโมง |

ท่านมักใช้พันทิปในช่วงเวลาใด

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> เช้า | (06.00 - 12.00 นาฬิกา) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> บ่าย | (12.00 - 18.00 นาฬิกา) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ค่ำ | (18.00 - 24.00 นาฬิกา) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ดึก | (หลังเที่ยงคืน - 06.00 นาฬิกา) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ไม่แน่นอน | |

นามแฝงของท่านในพันทิป คือ _____

เหตุใดท่านจึงใช้นามแฝงนี้

ท่านใช้รูปอะไรในการแสดงตัวตนของท่านในพันทิป

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> รูปจริงของตนเอง | <input type="checkbox"/> รูปคนอื่น (เช่น รูปดารา รูปนักกีฬา รูปเพื่อน) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> รูปสิ่งของ (เช่น หนังสือ คอมพิวเตอร์) | <input type="checkbox"/> รูปสัตว์ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> รูปธรรมชาติ (เช่น ทะเล ป่าภูเขา) | <input type="checkbox"/> รูปตัวการ์ตูน หรือรูปภาพกราฟฟิค |
| <input type="checkbox"/> รูปสถานที่ (เช่น สถานที่ทางประวัติศาสตร์ สถานที่ราชการ) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> รูปตัวอักษร หรือรูปภาพที่ประกอบไปด้วยตัวหนังสือเป็นส่วนใหญ่ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> อื่น ๆ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ไม่ใช้รูป | |

(สำหรับผู้ที่ใช้รูปจริงของตนเอง) เหตุใดท่านจึงใช้รูปจริงของตนเองในพันทิป

(สำหรับผู้ที่ไม่ใช้รูปใด ๆ เลย) เหตุใดท่านจึงไม่ใช้รูปใด ๆ แสดงตัวตนของท่านในพันทิป

สื่อใดบ้าง ที่ท่านมักนำข่าวมาเป็นแหล่งอ้างอิงในกระทู้ของท่าน

(โปรดระบุชื่อหนังสือพิมพ์ / ชื่อสถานีข่าว / ชื่อรายการข่าว / ชื่อเว็บไซต์ ฯลฯ)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

APPENDIX D

AUDIO RECORDS OF FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

For the references of all data collected in the study, the audiences can find the information in these two compact discs which consist of:

DVD-R 1: The audio records of focus group discussion and their transcription into Word document in Thai language.

DVD-R 2: The audio records of interviews and their transcription into Word document in Thai language.